THE

FOREST OF ST. BERNARDO.

A NOVEL,

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY *MISS M. HAMILTON.*

VOLUME II.

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1806.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
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THE

FOREST OF ST. BERNARDO.

CHAP. I.

MR. MILLWARD having finished the little narrative, said—

"I am happy to declare that your little interesting protegée is niece and heiress to the Mr. Edwards to whom I am executor; when dying he made a

full confession of his errors; never man died more penitent; he entreated me to make inquiry after his brother and family; if he or his wife survived, he left them the interest of his fortune during life, and afterwards the whole to Fanny. I made a fruitless search after Mr. Edwards; at last I learnt that he and his wife died in France, but could gain no intelligence respecting the child. I employed a person, if possible, to trace him out, which I was the more anxious to do, as I am her trustee and guardian. It gives me real pleasure to find her under the protection of my Emma, and that her education has been good and her manners polished. When she comes of age she will be entitled to ten thousand pounds. With your appro-

bation,

bation, Sir," addressing the General, "I think I had better acquaint Fanny with the change in her situation before I leave the Hall; and I wish for yours and Emma's advice in regard to her future destination. Do you think I should place her for a year or two at a boarding school?"

The General thought it right to acquaint her with her good fortune immediately, but did not see any occasion to remove her; she could be nowhere better placed.

"Are you not of my opinion, Emma?"

"Certainly, Sir; it would give me

pain to part with Fanny, and I will with pleasure take the charge of finishing her education. Dancing and French she is mistress of: I have already given her some lessons in music and drawing, as I found she had a taste for both; she spends her leisure time in the Temple of the Muses, and has made some progress in the sciences.

Fanny was sent for; Mr. Millward related every particular; her father's story affected her greatly. Mr. Millward told her that the General and Miss Roberts would continue their kind protection, and that he would manage her fortune to the best advantage. Fanny returned her thanks in a most interesting artless manner, and expressed

her

her joy and gratitude that she was to remain with her beloved patroness.

"Oh, Madam, how happy will this intelligence make the good Lady Abbess. With your permission I will write to her by to-day's post. I must go and acquaint Mrs. Ward, who I am sure will rejoice at my good fortune."

Fanny received the congratulation of her friends with a modesty that charmed them. The General insisted on a salute, and desired her to return to them as soon as she had finished her letter.

TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. II.

THE next morning Mrs. Millward and Mr. Seward set off for London; during their absence Mr. and Mrs. Montague were constant visitors at the Hall: preparations were made for the marriage; in ten days the gentleman returned, and, as settled, the morning after their arrival, put Mr. Millward in possession of his long-adored Emma; and James was rewarded for his fidelity at the same time, by receiving the hand of Betty from

from his master's. The ceremony was performed at an early hour without any parade. For that day the family went out of mourning; only Mr. and Mrs. Montague dined at the Hall. A good dinner was provided for the tenants and cottagers, and the pleasure grounds were opened for their amusement, for the first time since the death of Mr. Roberts. The day was spent in rational converse. After tea they paid a visit to the Hermit, who was much pleased with this mark of attention; the good man gave them his most sincere benediction. The evening concluded with a concert.

The following Sunday the family appeared at church, and the ensuing week was taken up in receiving visits from

the surrounding families, and in returning them.

The General expressed a wish that Mr. Millward would, on the first vacancy, become a member of the British senate, which he declined, saying, he wished to live a retired, though not an inactive life; that he should have sufficient to employ his time, and hope to prove himself a true patriot, by attending to the improvement of agriculture in every branch, and in promoting the happiness of all around him.

" The estate," continued he, " I have purchased will require great exertion and activity to bring it to perfection."

These and various other arguments induced the General to acquiesce. As soon as the hurry of visiting was over, Mr. and Mrs. Millward examined all the charitable institutions; they had the satisfaction of finding them under the best possible regulations; those destined for the old and infirm were adapted for ease and comfort; the seminary for the young, who were treated with care and tenderness, was calculated to promote industry, and every care taken to render them not only useful but valuable members of society.

The General and his amiable son and daughter soon gained the love and esteem of their dependants; blessed in each other, their days glided on in unin-

terrupted tranquillity. In less than ten months Emma added to her father's and husband's felicity, by presenting them with a fine boy; never was joy equal to the General's; the little stranger diffused happiness to all; open house was kept for three days; none more partook of the general joy than the Rector and family.

As soon as Mrs. Millward was sufficiently recovered to bear company, Mr. and Mrs. Seward joined the party, and were received with unfeigned pleasure. At the General's request the christening was solemnized in a splendid manner; cards of invitation were issued to the number of two hundred; a sumptuous dinner and ball were given on the occa-

sion,

sion, nor were the peasantry or humble cottagers forgotten; they partook of the festivity and hospitality of Upton Hall. To the great satisfaction of James, he was appointed master of the revels, and Betty, or rather Mrs. Jones, mistress of the rustic feast, she having been delivered of a boy about a fortnight before the young heir made his appearance.

James and his wife could not express the gratitude they felt, when they were told that the General and Mr. and Mrs. Millward intended to stand for their child, and that he was to be baptised at the same time as their son, for whom the sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Seward; he was named Edward Roberts; and James's boy was called William Henry,

after the General and Mr. Millward. The children were baptised at church, which was crouded with the tenants and domestics.

The company assembled long before the hour of dinner, to enjoy a ramble in the pleasure grounds. The day was spent in perfect harmony; every thing that art and nature combined could produce was on this occasion displayed, yet an elegant simplicity reigned throughout the decorations; the hall and gardens were splendidly illuminated; nothing could exceed the magnificence and grandeur of the scene; it appeared the work of enchantment. So well pleased were the guests that they did not think of departing till near five in

the

the morning; some of the company slept at the Hall; the next day was devoted to rest.

After the birth of Edward, Mr. and Mrs. Millward proposed paying a visit of six weeks to the good Lady Abbess; Fanny was to be of the party; but their intended tour was prevented by news arriving of the death of that truly amiable woman, who was most sincerely regretted by the whole community, which she had governed many years. This afflicting intelligence for a time damped the happiness of Mrs. Millward and Fanny; the latter daily improved, and had made a rapid progress in music and drawing; young Montague had become her admirer, with the approbation

of

of all parties: it was settled that, as soon as he was of age to take orders, their fate should be united.

Two years passed on; little Edward was the darling of them all; he began to lisp out grandpapa, which delighted the General. Before he had completed his third year, Mrs. Millward increased the family by the birth of a daughter, who shared their affections with her brother; she was named Matilda, after her maternal grand-mother; the same festivity was observed at her birth as at Edward's.

The buildings on Mr. Millward's estate were nearly finished; happy were they who could obtain a farm or cottage on his domain. The village was called

Thorpe; it contained above three hundred inhabitants; peace and innocence might be said to reside there; every encouragement was given to honest industry, and every one enjoyed the fruits of their labour. A school for boys and girls was erected, and an establishment for the aged on the same plan as at Upton; proper persons were appointed to superintend, who were capable of the important charge. No public-house was allowed on the estate, nor did the people want it, they had good home-brewed ale; they met at each other's houses of an evening.

A large neat chapel was built, and a handsome parsonage house; the salary of the clergyman was fixed at two hundred

dred a year; this Mr. Millward designed for Edward Montague, who was to take orders in the course of two years.

The Hall was a continued scene of domestic bliss and of old English hospitality; the General's youth seemed renewed in contemplating the happiness of his children and their lovely offspring.

Thus time rolled on till Edward had entered his sixth year, and Matilda her third. One evening in the month of December, as the enraptured parents were viewing the innocent gambols of their children, the family party were disturbed by the sound of a carriage, which announced a visitor; in a few minutes Mr. Millward was told that a

gentleman wished to speak to him, but did not choose to send his name. Mr. Millward was surprised, but instantly obeyed the summons, and almost instantly recollected a Spanish nobleman with whom he had contracted a friendship when at College, and with whom he had corresponded for some time after he resided in India; he ran to embrace him, saying—

"Is it possible? do I behold the Marquis Vaena?"

"The same," replied the Marquis, returning with all the warmth of friendship the proffered embrace.

"To whatever event I am indebted

for

for this unexpected visit," said Mr. Millward, " believe me, I sincerely rejoice at it; but why this appearance of privacy? Come, give me leave to present you to my family."

" Hold, Mr. Millward, I must first intrude on your patience, and give you my reasons for thus precipitately introducing myself; the urgency of my case must plead my excuse."

" Make no apologies, my friend," replied Mr. Millward, " but let me know how I can serve you; my fortune is at your command."

" Thanks, my dear Henry, for your generous offer; I am indeed going to

put

put your friendship to the proof, though not in a pecuniary way, but by entreating you and your amiable lady, not only to take charge, but supply the place of parents to a sacred pledge of affection, all that remains of my adored Juliana. Alas! am I then forced to part with my child?"

The Marquis became so agitated, he could not proceed; he paced the room in the greatest perturbation; in vain, for some time, was every effort of Mr. Millward's to calm him. By some incoherent expressions he found he had lost a beloved wife; at last a flood of tears relieved him.

"Pardon me, my friend, I fear you will

will think me deranged; indeed at times reason totters on her throne; but I will be as brief as possible, not daring to trust myself with a recital of scenes which would tear open wounds yet scarcely closed. I have in this paper detailed them; but the purport of my visit is to entreat of you and Mrs. Millward to receive and educate, either as a an orphan or a distant relation, my little Juliana; if you consent, I will bring her to you. I have left her with two confidential servants at the inn at ....I travelled *incog.* under the name of Seymour. Speak, my dearest friend; do you consent to my request? will Mrs. Millward extend her maternal cares, and be a mother to my helpless girl?"

"Be

"Be composed, my dear Lord, and rest satisfied that we will do every thing you request. My Emma, be assured, will adopt the little stranger, whom I am impatient to behold; let me prevail on you to make some stay with us; we can send for the child and servants."

"Ten thousand thanks for your kindness. I have found a safe and proper asylum for my little Juliana. I must return to her to-night; to-morrow I will pay my respects to your charming consort, whom I well remember at the time I passed a happy month with poor St. Clair at Belle-Vue, previous to our departure from Spain. The good General, too, is he well?"

"Never

" Never better, and will rejoice to see you; he was talking of you not long since, and wondering what was become of you. I made every inquiry after you on my return to England, and even waited on the Spanish Ambassador, who thought you were at Paris."

" I am pressed for time," said the Marquis, " but I am determined to dedicate a few days to friendship. Adieu, my dear friend for to-night; make my respects acceptable to the General and Mrs. Millward. I will be with you to-morrow by breakfast."

Having conducted the Marquis to his carriage, Mr. Millward returned to his

family,

family, who were curious to know who this unexpected visitor could be.

"You will be surprised," said Mr. Millward, when I tell you it was the Marquis Vaena."

"I am sure it must have given you pleasure, to have seen your early friend: but why did he not favour us with his company?" said the General; "and why did he make so short a visit?"

"I can hardly tell, my dear Sir, but he has promised to be with us by breakfast to-morrow, when he means to place under our protection an infant daughter; he has laid aside his title, and assumed the name of Seymour; he was too

much

much affected to enter into particulars, but this paper will disclose the seeming mystery. If you, Sir, and Emma approve, I will read it aloud."

They expressed an earnest wish to hear the Marquis's narrative. After tea Mr. Millward read as follows:

CHAP. III.

WITH what painful efforts, my friend, I address you! The occasion almost rends my heart-strings. Gracious Heavens! is it possible? must I resign my child? part with my little darling for ever? Hard, hard request! but my vow is past, the dying saint had the strongest and wisest reasons for urging my compliance. Sweet innocent! may thy days pass on in uninterrupted happiness, thy bosom ever be the mansion of

of peace! But whither am I wandering? let me recall my scattered senses, and relate my mournful story.

It is above four years, my dear Henry, since I have written; till that period you were acquainted with the minutest circumstances relative to my ill health; perplexities and various disagreeable occurrences occasioned my silence.

In my last letter I mentioned my father's having found out an alliance for me, but did not enter into particulars. The lady was the only daughter of Don Alvares, heiress to an immense fortune, of high rank, young and beautiful, but haughty in her demeanor, vindictive in her temper, and of a most jealous disposition;

sition: such was the woman my father had selected for my wife. My heart at that time was entirely disengaged. Had Donna Triphosa been amiable, I should certainly have obeyed, but I could not doom myself to wretchedness; such must have been my fate had I consented to the union. I represented to the Duke my reasons for not complying with his commands. Though indulgent in the extreme, he was obstinate in carrying any point he had set his heart on, and thought unconditional obedience in the article of marriage the duty of a son.

The only indulgence I could obtain was a twelvemonth's respite; as Donna Triphosa was scarcely fifteen, the Duke thought another year would add to her

improvement. He said, he should expect I would be frequent in my visits, and he had no doubt but her charms would make an impression on my heart.

Eleven months had elapsed, when, whether owing to uneasiness of mind, or a cold I caught, I was attacked with a violent bilious complaint, which baffled the skill of the physicians, and very near terminated my existence. This awakened all the father in the Duke, and he repented having used harshness. He conjured me to live for his sake; and if it would contribute to my recovery, he would give up the intended alliance.

For some weeks I remained in an uncertain state; at length the disorder took a favourable turn, and I was pronounced out of danger. Never was joy equal to my father's; but it was considerably damped on finding I did not gain strength; and, by the medical tribe declaring they were fearful of a decline, a voyage was recommended. The distress of the Duke, his anxiety and tenderness, affected me greatly, and made me half resolve, if I regained my health, I would marry Triphosa, though my heart revolted against the idea.

It was settled I should go to England, and try the efficacy of the Bristol waters. I accordingly embarked with a numerous suite, accompanied by my friend and

governor St. Clair. Once more I landed on the shores of Britain. The change of climate, the waters, and the salubrious air of Clifton greatly restored me; in less than a month I was able to ride on horseback.

In one of our excursions, tempted by the fineness of the morning, we had exceeded our usual ride; I felt myself tired and faint, the heat and fatigue had quite overcome me; St. Clair, who loved me with parental affection, was alarmed; he ordered one of the grooms to find some place of shelter from the mid-day sun; I was obliged to dismount, or should have fallen from my horse; the man returned in a few minutes with a servant in mourning, bring-

ing

ing a glass of wine and water, and a request from his mistress, that the gentlemen would rest themselves at the Cottage. I was hardly able to rise; but with the assistance of Monsieur St. Clair and the servants, reached the house, which was within an hundred yards, but concealed from our view by a clump of trees. We were received at the door by an elderly lady, who conducted us into a small but elegant parlour, entirely shaded from the sun.

A young lady of the name of Orme welcomed us with great politeness, and desired we would be seated. At that moment I found myself so ill, that I was hardly able to return thanks for her hospitality. Mrs. Beaumont, the name

of the other lady, begged me to repose myself on a sofa, and gave me some drops; refreshments of various sorts were brought, which having partaken of, I found myself better, and capable of making proper acknowledgments for her civilities, and to remark the extreme beauty and elegant manners of my young hostess, who appeared about nineteen; suffice it to say, her form was symmetry itself. On entering into conversation I found her face the index of her mind.

Two hours passed imperceptibly; nor did I think of going till my good friend gave me a hint by looking at his watch, and saying it was near two o'clock. I reluctantly arose, and apologised for my ong intrusion. Miss Orme, with ineff-

able

able sweetness, desired me not to hurry myself, or think of returning till I found I was equal to the fatigue. I was going to reply, when Monsieur St. Clair said—

"My dear Lord, I fear as the heat is still intense, your weakness will not suffer you to remount your horse. If we shall not trespass too much on Miss Orme's hospitality, I think it would be better to send a servant for your carriage, and am sorry it did not strike me before."

Miss Orme begged I would follow my friend's advice, and Mrs. Beaumont laughingly insisted that I should not be obstinate. I bowed my thanks. A servant was dispatched to Clifton; never

did time pass so swiftly ; when the man returned with the chaise I thought he must have flown.

We took our leave of the ladies, with many apologies for retarding their dinner hour, for it was after four. When we took our departure I obtained leave to pay my respects to them. Mrs. Beaumont said—

" I shall take the liberty, my Lord, of sending to inquire after you to-morrow."

I assured her I was much flattered by her kindness.

We drove off, but I had left my heart

behind,

behind, and could talk of nothing the rest of the day but Miss Orme. St. Clair was alarmed; he owned she was Nature's master-piece, yet conjured me to guard my heart against her attractions.

"Alas! my dear friend, your counsel is vain; I already feel I am a slave to her charms. Let me entreat of you, my dear St. Clair, to gain some information relative to her family and situation in life."

After much persuasion he consented, and the result of his inquiries proved satisfactory.

She was the only child of Mr. Orme,

who possessed a good fortune, and was the younger branch of a noble family; her mother died during her infancy, but her place had been amply supplied by Mrs. Beaumont, a near relation, who had formed part of the family ever since. She was a most amiable woman, every way competent to the charge she had undertaken, of forming the mind and manners of the young Juliana, whom she loved with a mother's fondness.

When Miss Orme had completed her twelfth year, her father resolved to visit Italy and France, as he wished his daughter's education to be finished in the first style. They resided four years on the Continent, during which time she was instructed by the first masters in

music

music and drawing, and became mistress of the French and Italian languages. No wonder, with these advantages, and blessed with an excellent understanding and genius, that Juliana was at sixteen a model of perfection.

On their return to England, Mr. Orme had purchased the cottage where they had lived ever since in perfect retirement, as Mr. Orme thought his daughter too young to make her appearance in the *beau monde*. His health too had for the last two years been in a declining state, and Juliana had the misfortune to lose the best of fathers about eight months previous to the commencement of our acquaintance. He left her thirty thousand pounds at her own disposal.

This

This intelligence convinced me that I should not disgrace myself by the alliance; in short, an intimacy took place; scarce a day passed that I did not visit the Cottage; the more I conversed with the lovely girl the more I became enslaved; St. Clair used every argument to persuade me to discontinue my visits, and to try to conquer my passion, which, he assured me, the Duke would never sanction; nay, it would certainly draw down his anger on me.

As yet I had not come to any explanation, but my eyes had spoken the sentiments of my heart, and I was fully convinced that I was in possession of Juliana's. Thus matters went on till near the end of Autumn; my health and strength

strength were perfectly re-established I received a letter from my father, saying, that as the season for drinking the waters was over, he wished me to return to Spain, as he longed for the happiness of embracing me; he mentioned that my Cousin Don Gusman, had prevailed on Donna Triphosa to consent to a private marriage, that her father was much enraged, but he imagined time would reconcile him.

"The particulars of this strange affair," he added, "I reserve for our meeting. Your cousin's fortune is at present not large, but he has great expectations. I sometimes think he has hopes of inheriting my title and estates;

this

this makes me, my dear Alonza, more desirous for you to marry."

This was the substance of the Duke's letter. I sincerely rejoiced that Donna Triphosa had disposed of herself, as one great impediment to my union with Juliana was removed; but my friend pointed out still stronger obstacles to get over, which he feared were insurmountable--the difference of religion and nation. He was likewise certain that the Duke would never permit me to unite myself to the daughter of a plain country gentleman, though possessed of accomplishments to adorn a throne.

"I do not imagine," continued he,

"that

"that fortune would be any consideration, but the other objections I have mentioned are sufficient to convince you, my dear Alonza, that it would be madness to enter into any engagements with Miss Orme; exert your fortitude, my Lord, and resolve to quit England immediately."

"In vain, my dear friend," I replied, "is your counsel; I told you from the first that I loved Juliana; every succeeding day has riveted my chains; besides, my honour is engaged. It is true I have made no declaration of my passion, but my actions must have convinced the lovely girl that I adored her; and I am certain, though she is unconscious of it, that I have gained her affections. Can

Can you then, who, from my earliest dawn of reason, have endeavoured to form my heart to every virtue, and to stamp on my mind the image of truth and rectitude, can you persuade to render unhappy an artless innocent girl? Oh, no, you cannot wish to act so contrary to the sentiments you have inspired!"

St. Clair assured me that nothing but the fear of my incurring the Duke's displeasure could have induced him to advise me to give up Juliana, of whose merit he was fully sensible; and to whom, if it depended on him, he should rejoice to see me united.

"Well then, my friend, suppose I could

could prevail on Miss Orme to consent to a private marriage?"

St. Clair hesitated. He plainly saw my happiness and that of an amiable young woman's were at stake; and as I was of age, he did not consider me as under his controul; yet this truly upright man could not reconcile it to his conscience to consent to what he thought might be deemed a breach of that confidence the Duke had ever reposed in him. However, my pleadings and his affection for me at length prevailed; reluctantly he agreed I should that evening open the subject to Juliana.

At an early hour we paid our accustomed visit at the Cottage; the ladies were

were alone; after tea a walk was proposed. St. Clair contrived to engage the attention of Mrs. Beaumont, and left me with Juliana.

After some general remarks on the beauty of the prospect and the fineness of the weather, I entered on the subject so near my heart, and declared my passion in the most fervent terms.

Juliana blushed! but her mind was superior to coquetry or duplicity. With a look replete with modesty, her eyes met mine, the expression of which convinced me my declaration had not displeased her. After a short pause she replied—

"I will

"I will not, my Lord, affect to say that I do not feel gratified by the declaration you have just made; I have long esteemed you, nor have I been insensible to your kind assiduities. I do not deny that you are dear to me; at the same time I am convinced that an union with you is next to impossible; I had therefore hoped you would have quitted England without coming to an explanation; time and a variety of objects might have conquered the mutual prepossession we feel. Believe me, my Lord, much as my happiness is at stake, I cannot condescend to intrude myself on a family that may despise me. Your father's consent I am certain you will never obtain, and I have too much your interest at heart to wish you to act

contrary

contrary to his pleasure. You have owned he has long had a match in view for you——"

I interrupted Juliana by saying—

"That obstacle is at least removed; I have this day received a letter from my father, informing me my Cousin Don Gusman has gained the prize. At the same time I will not, my adored Juliana, deceive you; the difference of religion and country, added to the high notions my father entertains of rank, may throw many impediments in the way of our union, but I hope to be able to surmount them. My friend St. Clair is entirely in our interest. I have commissioned him to acquaint Mrs. Beaumont with my

sentiments;

sentiments; and trust, if she approves of them, you will not oppose them. Let us join our friends, and hear the result of their consultation."

I soon found that St. Clair had been so warm an advocate in my favor, that I had little to fear from Mrs. Beaumont.

On our return to the Cottage, I entreated a patient hearing. I then mentioned my father's having recalled me to Spain; that he was more anxious than ever for my marrying, but did not seem to have any match in view; that the plan I had to propose was a private marriage; my fortune, in right of my mother, was large; that I certainly should

should do every thing in my power to reconcile the Duke to my choice.

"Ah! would to Heaven," I exclaimed, "he could see my Juliana! yet, should he prove inexorable, I could maintain my wife in a style suitable to my rank and future expectations."

My Juliana, sanctioned by her early monitress, in some measure yielded to my importunities; yet she wished to defer our marriage. I told her I would not at that time urge further on the subject, nor would I, without her permission, renew it.

St. Clair and myself took leave of the

ladies for the night; Mrs. Beaumont invited us to pass the next at the Cottage.

St. Clair informed me that Mrs. Beaumont was much my friend, nor could she suppose that the Duke, when acquainted with the merits of her lovely pupil, would be displeased with the match.

"My Juliana," said she, "though not of the highest rank, is noble by birth; her beauty, her accomplishments, and fortune, entitle her to match with the first families in this kingdom. Surely, even a Grandee of Spain cannot be disgraced by the alliance. The difference of religion I own is a great objec-

tion; yet I trust it will not prove insuperable."

"I cannot, my dear Alonza," continued St. Clair, "be so sanguine as this good lady, with whom you are in the highest favour; yet I sometimes flatter myself you will be able to prevail on the Duke to pardon what I am certain he would never consent to."

I wrote to my father, promising to leave England in a few weeks, but as the Bristol waters agreed so well with me, I was advised to continue there a little longer.

My Juliana received me the next day in a manner that delighted me. Neve. had

had she appeared so interesting as when, blushing, she told me she consented to be mine. In the course of the day matters were put in a train. I insisted on settling her fortune on her, with the addition of the estate I inherited in right of my mother.

Mrs. Beaumont mentioned the reason of their living so retired was owing to the desire of Mr. Orme, who had requested that Juliana should not be introduced to the gay world till she had obtained her twentieth year; that it was intended the ensuing winter to have taken a house in London, with a genteel establishment; and Juliana was to have made her *debut* in the region of fashion and pleasure under the protection of Sir

George and Lady Ormond, who were nearly related to her.

"But you, my Lord, have entirely deranged our plan."

I replied—

"Only for a short time, Madam, as I flatter myself in a few months I shall present my Juliana at the Courts of St. James's and Madrid as the Marchioness Vaena."

In less than a week the settlements were finished, and a special licence obtained. We fixed on a clergyman who had been long intimate in the family. The ceremony was performed at the Cottage;

Cottage; no one was present but Mrs. Beaumont, St. Clair, my faithful servant Pedro, and a female servant who had nursed Juliana; on their fidelity we could rely. Previously we had received the nuptial benediction from a worthy priest, a friend of St. Clair's, as it was necessary every precaution should be taken to render our marriage valid.

In order to be under less restraint, the next day Mrs. Beaumont and Juliana gave out they were going to spend a month on a visit to a relation at Gloucester. St. Clair and I were to join them at an appointed spot. I told my attendants we were going on a shooting party, and ordered them to have every thing in readiness for my departure for

Spain at my return; only Pedro and a groom who had attended me from a child, and was in the secret, accompanied us. We assumed the name of Seymour, and travelled in the most private manner; and we had a most delightful tour through that charming romantic country, South Wales.

Six weeks flew on downy wings; never mortal enjoyed more happiness; my lovely bride rose more and more in my estimation; daily I discovered some new perfection in her person and mind.

From this dream of bliss St. Clair at length awakened me, by hinting it was time to return to Clifton, as he was fearful there might be letters waiting for

me.

me. This cast a gloom on my spirits; which my Juliana instantly perceived, and anxiously inquired the cause. On my informing her, she could not conceal her emotion; a tear bedewed her eyes, and for a moment clouded their lustre; but finding I was much affected, she regained her composure, and entreated me to exert my fortitude; that with Monsieur St. Clair she thought it right to set out for Clifton immediately, as we were full three days' journey from it.

I yielded a reluctant consent to what I knew was absolutely necessary; within a few miles of the Passage we separated; St. Clair and I went on, the ladies were not to reach home till the next day.

On our arrival I found a letter from my father, expressing, in the strongest terms, his impatience to see me; and that he expected me to answer his letter in person. St. Clair conjured me not to delay complying with his request, as much depended on my finding him in good humour. As I knew nothing irritated him so much as suspence, I resolved to leave Clifton in two days. Everything was ready according to my orders; I could only dedicate a few hours to my adored Juliana, being obliged to make some visits of ceremony.

Permit me to draw a veil over the scene of parting; it is impossible to describe it. St. Clair forced me from

my

my Juliana, who had fainted in the arms of Mrs. Beaumont. We had settled that my wife's letters should be enclosed to St. Clair, and consigned to the care of a merchant at Madrid.

At soon as we reached London, I changed my dress and paid my parting visit to the Spanish Ambassador, and a few of the nobility that were in town. The next morning I had the happiness of hearing from my Juliana; her letter afforded me consolation, and in some measure tranquillised my mind. It assured me she was well, and promised she would exert herself, and not suffer my absence to prey on her spirits. She conjured me to take care of myself for her sake; in short, it breathed the most

ardent, yet the most delicate avowal of her affection, and her confidence in my attachment and a firm reliance on my honour. It concluded by saying, she would venture to direct one letter to Falmouth, for which place we set off immediately, and found the packet would sail in a few hours.

I wrote a long letter to Juliana, and bid adieu to England (now more than ever endeared to me) with a heavy heart.

We had a quick passage, and had the pleasure of finding the Duke well, and much rejoiced to see me, though he said, I did not look so well as he expected. The anxiety of my mind had greatly

injured my health. To my father I pleaded fatigue.

A few weeks passed without anything material happening. I had twice heard since my arrival from Juliana, and wrote to her by every opportunity. I had not yet been able to sound my father on the subject of my marriage; we had been scarcely an hour disengaged. Don Gusman and Donna Triphosa were on a visit to the Duke. Don Alvares was reconciled to them, and was fitting up a house at Madrid for their reception.

They received me with apparent affection, and Donna Triphosa seemed entirely to have forgotten that I had slighted her proffered hand, and strove by every

means in her power to conciliate my esteem. She contrived to keep me so constantly engaged, that I had hardly a moment to call my own, or to consult my faithful St. Clair. I was not a dupe to the art of either Gusman or Triphosa, but common politeness obliged me to pay them every attention during their residence with us. I longed for the moment of their departure, which they had fixed for the first week in January, and it was now the middle of December.

One morning after breakfast I was accidentally alone with the Duke, who alarmed me by addressing me nearly in these words—

"I have, scarcely, my dear Alonza, since

since your return enjoyed your company; the different engagements and continual round of company, have prevented me from entering into any conversation relative to your future views. It is high time for you to settle; I have many reasons for urging it. I rejoice that you disapproved of the proposed union with Triphosa, as I am now convinced that young lady would have rendered you miserable. Have you seen among the beauties that adorn our Court one that you would choose for a partner through life? If not, I wish you to reserve your heart for a lady I mean to introduce you to shortly, whom I think you will approve."

I was going to reply as well as the agitation I was in would permit, and which I wonder escaped the Duke's observation, when the arrival of Don Gusman, his lady, and other company, prevented me. My father said in a low voice—

" Reflect, Alonza, on what I have been saying, and at our next conference let me know your determination."

I felt myself relieved by this respite, but could not collect my spirits sufficiently to join in conversation, which unfortunately turned on the young beauty, who was to be presented the following week. I was so totally absent, that I was severely rallied

rallied on my insensibility, particularly by Triphosa, who, with a malicious smile, said—

" Surely, my dear cousin, you have left your heart in England; some British fair one holds you in captivity, or you never would slight the charms of your own countrywomen."

This ill-timed sally increased my embarrassment so much, that the Duke noticed it, and frowning, said—

" I am certain Alonza has too great an affection for me to form any tie that would embitter the short remains of my life."

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWA

Had not my friend St. Clair kindly contrived to engage the attention of the Duke, and give a sudden turn to the conversation, I should certainly have betrayed myself; fortunately at the instant a servant entered to tell me an intimate friend of mine wished to speak with me. I made an apology to the company, and left the room.

I had no opportunity of consulting St. Clair till the next morning. He was as unhappy as myself; not that we imagined the Duke had any idea of my situation, but we plainly perceived he was against my forming a connection with an English woman. We thought it would be improper at this period to acquaint him with my marriage. Thus

passed

passed time. The Duke did not renew the conversation; indeed I avoided being alone with him.

At length Don Gusman and his lady took their leave. The morning after the Duke sent for me into his closet, and asked me what I had determined on, and if I had selected a lady on whom I thought worthy of conferring my name and title.

I assured him I had not.

"Well," replied the Duke, "I hope in a few days you will surrender your heart to the beautiful Sophronia, who is to make her first appearance at Court. She is the only child of Don Sebastian,

but

but her rank and fortune are her least merit."

I promised to attend the Duke, as I knew my refusal would offend him, though I foresaw it would involve me in many difficulties.

To add to my uneasiness I received a letter from Juliana, informing me that shortly she should present me with a pledge of our love; that her situation could not long be concealed; but she by no means wished me to be premature in disclosing our marriage, as she dreaded nothing so much as my incurring the Duke's displeasure. Mrs. Beaumont had proposed a plan, which, if I approved of, they would put in execution.

ecution. It was, to sell the Cottage, and to send her old servant John to inquire for a house and grounds in Devonshire, that would suit a small family; she proposed to take the name we had before assumed: she desired an immediate answer.

This excellent woman did not, by unavailing regret, add to my unhappiness; on the contrary, her letters inspired me with fortitude. I wrote to her that I approved her plan, the arrangements of which I left to her and Mrs. Beaumont. I promised, let what would be the consequence, to pay her a visit in the spring; and hoped I should be in time to support and comfort her in the hour of trial.

The

The dreaded day arrived that I was to be introduced to Donna Sophronia. My father insisted I should make a splendid appearance.

It was a high festival, and the Court was brilliant and crowded; every Cavalier was eager to pay his devoirs to the new divinity. I must do my father the justice to say, that the second choice he made for me did him honour; never did I behold (one woman excepted) charms equal to those that adorned the young Sophronia; they were heightened by the blushes caused by the universal admiration she excited.

At night there was a ball and supper. I had the honour of her hand, which occasioned

occasioned general envy. On entering into conversation, I found her sensible and animated. Had I had a heart to bestow, she certainly would have obtained it, so fascinating was she in every respect.

My father watched me, and saw, with evident pleasure, that I entered into the spirit of the amusement. He and Don Sebastian conversed a good deal together; I had no doubt of the subject. The ball did not break up till late. The Duke withdrew soon after supper, and had retired to rest long before I reached home.

I was fatigued, but too much agitated

to

to sleep. I wished for morning, yet dreaded to meet my father, for I could not frame any excuse, or make any objection to an alliance with the accomplished Sophronia, but by declaring my prior engagement, and avowing my marriage.

At length I resolved to acquaint the Duke, and was just going to his apartment to wait his rising, when St. Clair entered; and on my mentioning my intention, he begged I would not think of it.

"The Duke," continued he, "on his return home last night, sent for me to his closet, and we had a long conversa-

tion

tion relative to you; he told me he was very uneasy at the great alteration he perceived in your manner and mode of life."

" 'Alonza used,' continued his Grace, 'to be the life of every party, he is now cold and inanimate; to-night, for the first time, he seemed cheerful and attentive; this gives me hopes that Donna Sophronia has made an impression on his heart; I have suspicions at times that he has attached himself to some fair one in Britain; but as I never would consent, whatever the rank or merit of the lady, to his marrying a heretic, I trust my fears are groundless. Tell me, my friend, has he made you acquainted with the state of his affections?'

" Judge,

"Judge, my dear Lord, of my feelings, at being thus interrogated; for the first time, since I was honoured with the confidence of his Grace, I had recourse to artifice and falsehood. I disavowed my knowledge of your having formed any connection; said, I believed the lowness of your spirits proceeded from your health not being perfectly re-established; and mentioned, it was the opinion of the faculty, that it would be adviseable for you again to visit Clifton the ensuing spring. The Duke, whose parental feelings are ever tremblingly alive, expressed much alarm, and declared his intention of questioning you on the subject of your health.

"Surely, my dear St. Clair, you do

not

not think my son in danger. I know your love for him almost equals mine; do not, I conjure you, deceive me in this point."

"I assured his Grace I had no fears for your life, but thought you in that delicate state that you required great care. In short, the good Duke forgot Donna Sophronia, and we parted without the subject being renewed. If his Grace should press you to receive the hand of Donna Sophronia, plead your weak state of health; and indeed, my dear Alonza, your looks bespeak you far from well."

A summons from the Duke to attend

 breakfast

breakfast prevented any further discourse; however, I was convinced that my marriage must remain a profound secret. My want of rest had given me a violent head-ach.

On my entering the room, my father anxiously inquired how I did. I replied, I found myself rather fatigued with my last night's exertions. After we had discussed the topics of the day, the Duke asked me what I thought of Donna Sophronia, and if she had answered the description I had heard of her. I said she was a most lovely creature, and that the voice of fame had merely done her justice.

"Do

"Do you mean to pay your respects to her this morning?"

"Certainly, Sir; common politeness requires it."

"Well, I am not without hopes, Alonza, that she will steal your heart; but take your own time; and believe me, in wishing you to form this alliance, I only seek your happiness."

I was received by Don Sebastian with every mark of friendship, and by his daughter with visible pleasure. After a little general conversation, Don Sebastian desired her to play a lesson on the harpsichord, which she executed in an elegant style; she afterwards sang

several Italian airs with a taste and judgment that astonished me.

Spite of the uneasiness which preyed upon me, I spent a very agreeable morning, and received a pressing invitation to dine with them the next day. Imperceptibly I was drawn into an intimacy with Donna Sophronia. My father was delighted, and was continually forming parties of pleasure. He gave a grand ball and supper on my birth-day as usual; Sophronia was my partner. I was more and more pleased with her society, and conceived a most sincere friendship for her. I loved her as a sister; but can with safety avow that I never for a moment, even in thought, swerved from my attachment to my

adored

adored Juliana; nor did I perceive I had engaged the affections of this lovely artless girl till it was too late. St. Clair had often hinted it, but I assured him his fears were without foundation.

An incident, trifling in itself, discovered the state of her heart. I was riding out one evening, when I met Sophronia and another lady, who were taking an airing. I stopt to speak to them, and was conversing with my hand on the carriage door; my horse was a spirited one, and wanted to go on; on my checking him he reared, and being off my guard, I was thrown under the coach wheels; the ladies screamed; Sophronia fainted; with the assistance of the servants I was soon on my legs,

as I had not received the least injury. It was some time before Sophronia recovered: the first words she uttered were—

"Oh, Heavens, he is killed, and I am wretched for life!"

On raising her fine eyes, she perceived I was supporting her, (for we had taken her out of the carriage for air,) never shall I forget the expression of joy that beamed in her lovely countenance on finding I had escaped unhurt; nor the delicate confusion she was in at having discovered sentiments so warmly in my favour.

In the most delicate manner I calmed

her

her agitation, and assured her of my gratitude for the lively concern she expressed for my safety. She so earnestly entreated that I would not remount my horse, that, to quiet her fears, I consented to return with them in the carriage.

I found the Duke and St. Clair at Don Sebastian's, who were much alarmed at hearing of my accident, and begged a surgeon might be sent for. I laughed them out of their fears, and convinced them that no medical assistance was wanted. I exerted myself to the utmost, but it was with difficulty I concealed my chagrin the discovery of Sophronia's partiality for me occasioned. On my return home I took myself severely to task for my inconsiderate

behaviour. On St. Clair entering my apartment, I exclaimed—

"My dear friend, you were too true a prophet; would to Heaven I had attended to your admonitions! it is now, alas! too late; Sophronia loves me, and I have to reproach myself with having rendered unhappy one of the most estimable and innocent of her sex. Can you advise me how to act? the perturbations of my mind quite overpowered me."

"Moderate these emotions, my dear Lord," said St. Clair; "I blame myself for not having taken effectual means to prevent what, from the first, I expected would happen; but unavailing regret

will

will not remedy the evil; let us consider what is best to be done, and how you may withdraw your attentions from Sophronia without wounding her pride."

After a long consultation, and forming and rejecting various plans, it was resolved I should make her the confidant of my situation, and entreat her advice how to act, without hinting that I had discovered her partiality for me, but impute her alarm at my fall to friendship.

The following day my father expressed a wish that I would bring things to a conclusion, as Don Sebastian began to be impatient at my not being more explicit. I replied, that I certainly

admired Donna Sophronia, but was by no means certain that I was the favoured lover.

"Make the essay," said the Duke, "I will ensure you success."

In order to end this discourse, I told him I was going to inquire after Sophronia's health. I found her alone. After thanking her for the marks of her esteem she had honoured me with, and assuring her of my gratitude and friendship, the latter of which I was going to give a strong proof of, by entrusting her with a secret, and imploring her advice how to act in an affair on which my future happiness or misery depended.

After a short preface, and apologising for the liberty I was going to take, I entered into a minute detail of every circumstance relative to my passion for Juliana, our private marriage, her present situation.

"You are no stranger, Madam," I continued, "that our fathers have formed a plan for uniting us without consulting our inclinations; mine, indeed, justly imagined I could not be insensible to the resplendent beauties of your mind and person. Nothing but my having surrendered my heart before I had the honour of knowing you, to one every way your counterpart, could have prevented me from long since becoming your captive, and claiming a

prize so many vainly aspire to. It is needless, Madam, to say, that I fear, independent of the disappointment and anger my father will feel at my not complying with his wishes in regard to you, there are other obstacles that will prevent his being reconciled to my having entered into vows without consulting him—my Juliana is an English woman and a protestant. Will you, Madam, deign to assist me in this exigency? I flatter myself I have exculpated myself from being insensible to your perfections, and if you find much to condemn in my conduct, you will at least find as much to pity."

It is impossible to paint the various emotions that agitated the delicate frame

of Sophronia during my recital, or the different passions her countenance expressed, but it was easy to perceive that love and compassion prevailed; her gentle bosom was a stranger to malice or revenge, nor could anger long dwell there.

Sophronia had heard me with a fixed attention. After a short pause she raised her eyes, and while the blushes that suffused her lovely face added to her charms, she, in a faltering voice, thus addressed me—

"I thank you, my Lord, for this candid avowal of your sentiments, and for the confidence you have reposed in me, which, rest assured, I will never betray.

I wish

I wish you had sooner acquainted me with your situation, it would have saved me some pangs, though I must do you the justice to acknowledge that your attentions have never exceeded the bounds of friendship. For some time I have discovered you were melancholy and unhappy, and feared our projected alliance was the cause. Could I have assumed courage, I would have inquired what mystery enveloped you, as even in company you were often absent and thoughtless. It is needless to say, that you possess both my friendship and esteem; point out how you would wish me to act, my endeavours shall not be wanting to extricate you from the dilemma you are involved in."

" Thanks, ten thousand thanks, most generous of women, for your unexampled goodness, which it will never be in my power to repay."

" Stop, Alonza, let us not waste the time in useless protestations, when we have not a moment to lose, for my father meets the Duke this evening to adjust matters relative to our intended marriage; there is but one way I can serve you; allow me to consult my father."

I involuntarily started.

" Be not alarmed, my friend; did you know the greatness of Don Sebastian's soul, the goodness of his heart,

and the mildness of his temper, you would not hesitate at what I propose. Indulge me in this request; I pledge my word you shall not repent it, only give me full liberty to act."

"Do as you think best, my lovely friend; I trust implicitly to you."

"Leave me at present, Alonza; you shall, if possible, hear from me this evening. If the Duke questions you on this meeting, say I appeared to receive your declaration with coldness. Adieu! Heaven direct us!"

I kissed her hand, and retired, full of admiration at the magnanimity of her conduct. My father had no oppor-

tunity

tunity of speaking to me on the subject, as some affairs of importance to the state engaged his attention. I sought my faithful St. Clair, and related the event of my interview with Sophronia; he joined me in her praise. We anxiously waited the result of her conference with her father; our curiosity was strongly excited to know what steps she would pursue. The next morning I received the following billet from Sophronia—

"Every thing, my much-esteemed friend, has succeeded to our wish. My father, with his accustomed goodness, yielded to my entreaties, and has found means to break off the intended alliance. With me he feels for

your

your situation. You will excuse us for avoiding an interview; we leave Madrid this morning; the Duke will, I imagine, inform you of the particulars. I have, with my father's consent, taken the blame on myself. Adieu. May Heaven guard and protect you, and give you to the arms of your adored wife! Be more cautious than ever in keeping your secret: your motions are watched. Beware of Triphosa and Gusman; they are your implacable enemies. Once more adieu. Ever yours, with friendship and esteem.

"SOPHRONIA."

The Duke returned so late, that we did not meet till breakfast. I found he had kept his appointment with Don

Sebastian;

Sebastian; he seemed unusually ruffled. After a few moments of silence, he said—

"Surely, Alonza, a fatality hangs over you."

"In what regard, Sir?"

"Why, Donna Sophronia has changed her mind, and has found out that she wishes to enjoy her freedom a little longer. She pleads indisposition, and that change of air is necessary. The old fool, her father, is alarmed, and fearful she has fretted herself sick. Instead, as I expected at our meeting, to have settled every thing, he begged I would not be offended at his declining the

alliance,

alliance, which he protested was the first wish of his heart, but he could not account for the caprice of young minds.

" 'Pardon me, my friend, for yielding to the solicitations of my darling girl. Impute it to parental weakness, for I cannot oppose her inclinations.'

" I made scarcely any reply to this fine harangue, only advised him to be careful how he entered into engagements for the future, and abruptly left the room. As to you, Alonza, I do not think your heart was concerned in the business, therefore your disappointment is not great."

I replied, it was more in compliance

with his Grace's wishes than my own inclinations; yet no one could see and converse with Sophronia without admiring her.

This affair, so happily terminated, relieved my anxiety in some measure, but I had still much on my mind; I was impatient to be in England, as the last letter from Juliana mentioned she was daily in expectation of being confined: she and Mrs. Beaumont were settled in their new habitation, within a few miles of Matlock, where she said I was anxiously expected. I grew restless and uneasy.

St. Clair took occasion to mention to the Duke he thought an excursion

sion would be of infinite service to me; to his great surprise, my father objected to my again visiting England, and proposed my making the tour of France; this entirely disconcerted our plan. St. Clair advised me to make no objection to the Duke's proposal, only desire to travel *incog.*

"It will be easy," said he, "to deceive the Duke."

Accordingly, when my father expressed a wish for me to spend a few months in France, I told him I approved of the scheme, only requested permission to travel as a private gentleman. To this he made no objection, and consented

that

that Monsieur St. Clair and I should only be attended by Pedro and one footman.

A few days previous to the time fixed for the commencement of our journey, I received a letter from Mrs. Beaumont, informing me of my Juliana having presented me with a charming little girl, and that both mother and child were in a fair way of doing well. It is impossible to describe the different sensations I felt at this pleasing intelligence. How ardently did I long to clasp my beloved wife and infant to my heart.

" Congratulate me, my friend," said I to St. Clair, who had entered the room, before I had finished the letter,

" my

"my Juliana is safe, and has made me the happy father of a lovely girl. Would to Heaven we could set off this instant."

"Your wish, my dear Alonza, will be accomplished. The Duke is eager for our departure. I have just come from him. By an innocent stratagem I have obtained his consent to your spending three months, and more if necessary, at Matlock."

"How, my friend, did you prevail on my father to alter his plan?"

"As I told you, by stratagem. I bribed the physician to say he perceived symptoms of a decline; and the only chance of preventing it was for you to

try

try the air and waters of Matlock, as every thing is ready. His Grace wishes us, if the wind is fair, to embark the day after to-morrow. He has sent to engage the whole of the packet to prevent any delay."

In as short a time as possible I had the supreme felicity of embracing my wife and child, and the good Mrs. Beaumont. After the first transports of meeting were over, I entered into a detail of every thing that had passed since our separation; a tear stole down my Juliana's cheek when I described Sophronia and her generous conduct.

"Heroic girl!" exclaimed my wife, "may Heaven reward your unexampled virtue!

virtue! How I long for your friendship, and to convince you that I estimate the sacrifice you made to our happiness as it deserves. I am afraid, my dear Alonza, I could not have acted so disinterested a part."

The house and grounds my Juliana had hired for the season were beautifully situated, and most elegantly laid out; to me it appeared a paradise.

I wrote to my father, assuring him I had found great benefit from the air and waters, which was really true, as I mended daily. In his answer he desired I would remain there as long as the season permitted, and defer my tour to France till the ensuing year.

We

We lived quite retired. My little Juliana, who began to take notice, was a continual source of amusement. Music, reading, and walking filled up our time.

Six months glided away imperceptibly: various were the plans formed and rejected relative to our future proceedings. I wished to publish our marriage, though I was certain of being disinherited, but that was of no importance; the title and entailed estate must devolve to me, and the fortune I derived from my mother was large; and, joined with my wife's, was amply sufficient, not only for the comforts but the luxuries of life, and to rear a young family equal to the rank their birth entitled them to.

What withheld me was, the fear of rendering my father miserable; my Juliana too would not hear of it; such exalted notions had she of filial love, that she thought we ought to make every sacrifice to secure the peace of a parent; often would she reproach herself as the occasion of my having deviated from my duty.

At length we determined to continue in obscurity; and had it not been for the thoughts of our approaching separation, we should have been perfectly happy. St. Clair was of opinion that I ought not to defer any longer my return to Spain. It was now the middle of November, and I could no longer with propriety retard our departure.

It

It was settled that the next summer we should meet in France.

This second parting was far worse than the first; a pre-sentiment of some unforeseen misfortune was strongly impressed on our minds. My Juliana's fortitude forsook her, and for some days previous to our setting out she was the image of despair, yet she had the resolution to insist on my departure. At last I tore myself away from all I held dear: had it not been for the unremitted attention of my ever-kind St. Clair, I should have sunk under the trial.

My father received me in the most affectionate manner, and seemed to have lost all suspicion of my having formed

any connection in England. To my satisfaction I found Don Gusman and his lady were at a distant part of the kingdom, attending a rich relation, to whom Gusman expected to be heir. Don Sebastian and his amiable daughter were making the tour of Italy.

I passed the winter in tolerable serenity. I had the pleasure of hearing frequently from my adored wife, who assured me she was in good health, and that our little girl improved daily.

Early in the spring I was plunged into affliction by the sudden death of my faithful friend and confidant St. Clair. I had been a day's excursion into the country with some friends: at my

return in the evening I found the house in confusion, and the servants in tears; Pedro met me in the hall, but could not speak.

"For Heaven's sake," cried I, "tell me what is the matter. How is the Duke?"

"His Grace is well," said Pedro, in a faltering voice, "but Monsieur St. Clair——"

"What of him?"

"He is very dangerously ill," replied Pedro.

I staid to hear no more, and flew up

the stairs; and before the attendants could prevent me, I was in his apartment. Great God! what were my feelings on beholding the guide and instructor of my childhood, the friend and monitor of my riper years, a senseless corpse, whom in the morning I left in apparent good health. He was sitting with the Duke after dinner, conversing cheerfully, and was seized with an apoplexy that in a few moments terminated the existence of the best of men.

I stood absorbed in the deepest melancholy; my thoughts were a perfect chaos, till roused by a message from the Duke, desiring to see me. Mechanically I obeyed the summons. The sight of my father, who was in great affliction,

awakened

awakened the softer feelings, and I burst into tears, which greatly relieved me. We strove, but in vain, to comfort each other.

The Duke sincerely lamented his loss, as he estimated him highly; but to me it was a blow I could scarcely support. I had ever felt for him the love and respect of a son, and he had ever acted as an affectionate parent to me. I was fearful of letting Juliana know the event, as she was much attached to him; but it was necessary to inform her of it, as my letters must come through another channel.

When I could collect my ideas, I wrote the melancholy account; and, as

soon as possible, received an answer. Ah! how sweetly consolatory were my Juliana's arguments, how resigned to the dispensations of Providence, though she most sincerely regretted the death of this truly good man. I had the happiness of hearing that she and my little girl were well, who, she wrote me, began to lisp papa.

The Duke perceiving I did not recover my spirits, desired me to change the scene.

"Time, and a variety of objects," said he, "will soften the poignancy of your grief, and you will only retain a grateful remembrance of this excellent departed man. Go, then, my son; for your

your sake, I deprive myself of the pleasure of your society; for mine be careful of your health; and let me have the happiness at your return of finding you have so far conquered your feelings, as to be resigned to an event which, sooner or later, awaits us all."

My father asked me where I intended to spend the summer. I replied—

"In the South of France."

My answer pleased him. He wished me to travel with *eclat*, but I declined it by saying I was unfit at present to attend to parade or ceremony. He urged me to take some friend as a companion, but I assured him I should sooner regain my

spirits by being under no restraint, though I felt myself truly grateful for his tender anxiety; that he might depend on my exertions, and had no doubt but I should in a short time be able to write a good account of my health and state of mind.

I at last prevailed on my father to consent to my travelling my own way; his expressions of affection when I took leave affected me; and the fervency of his blessing made so strong an impression on me, that it was with difficulty I restrained myself from avowing my marriage, and imploring his forgiveness.

I had written to Juliana to meet me at Calais, as I preferred going by sea; there

there I had the pleasure of again embracing my wife and child. The joy of this meeting was lessened by the thought of poor St. Clair, and the visible alteration in the looks of the worthy Mrs. Beaumont, who I found had been in a declining state for some time; but she had forbid Juliana to mention it in her letters, fearing to add to my uneasiness. She perceived I was unhappy about her, and endeavoured to quiet my fears by assuring me she was better, and had great hopes the mild climate of Montpellier would restore her.

The next morning I dispatched Pedro to take a ready furnished villa in the vicinity of Montpellier, and resolved to wait his return before we commenced

our journey. Pedro soon found a retreat that in every respect suited us; he hired the necessary servants, and left orders to have every thing ready for our reception.

We travelled by easy stages, and arrived at our villa in ten days, which was most romantically situated in a delightful valley. In this sequestered spot, blessed with the society of my wife and the prattling of my darling Juliana, I soon recovered my health and spirits.

For some weeks we flattered ourselves that Mrs. Beaumont daily gained ground, and that her disorder had taken a most favourable turn; but a sudden and violent relapse destroyed our hopes, and

we

we expected her speedy dissolution; yet she lingered nearly three months, during which time she suffered the most excruciating pain with the resignation and fortitude of a true Christian; her unaffected piety, the frequent discourses we had on religious subjects, gave me a prepossession in favour of the Protestant mode of worship. On finding her end fast approaching, she took an opportunity, when Juliana had left the room, of thus addressing me—

"I know not, my dear Lord, how to advise you to act in the present emergency. Juliana will very shortly be deprived of my protection, and will not be able, I fear, in future to support your absence; besides, her youth and beauty renders

renders it highly improper for her to live separate from her husband, and ——————"

I interrupted Mrs. Beaumont by saying, I was determined, let what would be the consequence, to declare my marriage, and do justice to my wife and child, who should no longer live in obscurity, but fill the rank in life they were entitled to."

"Stop, my dear friend," said this excellent woman, "be not too precipitate; weigh well the mode of discovery, and do not plunge into difficulties you may never surmount; but, above all, avoid incurring the malediction of the Duke; a parent's curse is terrible, and I am

am certain it would be the death of our beloved Juliana. Certain of your honour, and the strong affection you bear your wife and child, added to my knowledge of your principles both moral and religious, I am assured that you never will give my darling girl cause to repent having trusted her happiness in your hands. As it is impossible to point out what steps you had best take, I can only implore the Almighty to bless and guide you. If practicable, let me entreat of you to remain with Juliana this winter; she will stand in need of all your care and attention, to enable her to bear the shock my death will give her. I have for some time past been endeavouring to prepare her for it. The only pang I feel in quitting this world is the

thought

thought of parting with those I love, and causing them affliction."

Mrs. Beaumont survived this discourse only a week. She retained her senses and strength of mind to the last. She had settled her worldly affairs previous to her leaving England. Her fortune and jewels she bequeathed our little girl, except five hundred pounds to her woman, who had lived with her many years.

A few hours before her death she took a most affectionate and affecting leave of us, thanked us for our care and attention, blessed the child, and most fervently recommended us to the protection of Heaven; she then desired us

to

to leave her, as she wished to take some repose; she sank into a deep sleep, in which she expired without a groan.

My Juliana had supported herself wonderfully, but the great fatigue she had undergone, added to the anxiety of her mind, proved too much for her naturally delicate frame; she endeavoured, for my sake, to conquer her feelings, but in vain; unfortunately she was far advanced in her pregnancy, and in two days after Mrs. Beaumont's death she was delivered of a still-born son, which she survived only ten days.

Sensible of her danger, she employed her time in arming me with fortitude, and conjuring me to moderate my affliction

tion for her sake. She earnestly requested that our marriage should be consigned to oblivion, and the child to be educated as an orphan, and entirely ignorant of having a parent living.

"Yet, oh, my Alonza! in secret watch over her helpless infancy. My fortune," continued the dying saint, "will entitle her to an eligible, if not a splendid situation in life. I need not urge my dear husband to let her education be liberal. Have you any friend in England to whom you can intrust this important charge? I have often heard you speak of Mr. Millward in terms of the highest esteem, and regret that you have dropped his correspondence; seek him out, and to him confide the secret of

of our ill-fated marriage, and entreat him to be a parent to our infant girl."

I conjured my Juliana not to persist in her request, but permit me to declare our marriage, and own my child, from whom I could not consent to be separated. Never shall I forget her looks of entreaty, grasping my hands and fixing her languid eyes upon me, she said—

" Does my adored Alonza refuse my last request ?"

She fainted in my arms. I pressed her to my heart in a transport of grief, and by my violent exclamations roused her: half frantic, and scarcely knowing what I did, I solemnly vowed to fulfil

her

her injunctions, however repugnant to the feelings of my heart.

"Thanks, my still-idolised Alonzo; by this promise, which I know you will hold sacred, you have smoothed the bed of death. As soon as possible after my decease return to Spain, and devote yourself to sooth the latter days of the Duke. And, oh, my dear Alonzo, if you would fulfil my last and most sanguine wish, do justice to the virtues of Sophronia; let not that lovely girl pine in secret; the sacrifice she made to your happiness calls for your gratitude: tell her, as a proof of my regard, with my dying breath I blessed her, and bequeathed her my Alonzo. Let our child be brought up a Protestant, which

is

is the reason I wish the Duke to remain in ignorance of his having a grand-child——"

She was proceeding, but grew too faint to articulate. She lived till the next morning; but permit me, my friend, to draw a veil over the parting scene. She retained her senses to the last, and expired in my arms. I fear the vehemence of my grief disturbed her last moments.

As soon as she ceased to breathe I became insensible to all around me. My faithful Pedro had me conveyed from the chamber of death, sent for a surgeon to bleed me, and put me to bed, as I had not had my clothes off for several days,

nor

nor taken any rest; nature was exhausted, and I fell asleep; but, oh, my God! to what horrors did I awake! Suffice it to say, that I was for some weeks in a state of distraction, which terminated in a stupor.

The uncommon attention and care of Pedro and the women attendants saved my life, nay, restored my senses. They presented my little Juliana to me daily, but I took no notice of her innocent endearment. At last, the sight of her, and the exclamation of "My own dear papa," roused me from my apathy; and, embracing the precious pledge, I burst into tears; from that moment I recovered my reason.

During

During my state of insensibility, Pedro had conducted every thing as I could have wished; he had sent two trusty domestics over to England with the remains of Mrs. Beaumont and my wife, with orders to see them interred in the vault belonging to the family, and gave directions that every respect should be paid to their memory.

I had scarcely recovered strength to leave my room, when a letter arrived from my father, informing me he was confined by the gout, and had had a violent attack of it in his stomach, which had left him weak and low; he entreated me to return to Spain immediately, as he was more than ever impatient to embrace me. I was obliged to

collect my ideas to write to him. I assured him that nothing but a severe indisposition should have prevented me from obeying his summons; begged him not to be alarmed; that I had been exceedingly ill, but was recovering fast, and hoped in less than a month I should be able to commence my journey. I promised to write by every post, and begged to hear from him as soon as possible.

Weak as I was, I settled every thing in the course of three days, and set out for England. I arrived in London a week since, and from your agent had the satisfaction of hearing you resided at Upton Hall, and had been some years united to the amiable Miss Roberts.

I de-

I determined to pay you a visit, and if I found you the same warm friend you had ever been, to entreat your protection for my infant girl.

I have entered into a length of detail, which I fear you will think tiresome, but it was necessary you should be acquainted with the minutest particulars of my unhappy story; pardon, therefore, my dear friend, my prolixity, and believe me most unalterably yours,

VAENA.

CHAP. IV.

The length of the Marquis's narrative had kept the family up long beyond their usual hour of retiring; yet, as they wished to be ready to receive him, they assembled in the morning early.

Mr. Millward had just finished it when the servant announced Mr. Seymour. He was received in a manner that at once soothed and flattered him. He presented his

his little girl to Mrs. Millward, and entreated her maternal care in a way so pathetic and graceful, that he affected all present. Emma could not refrain from tears. She tenderly embraced the child, and vowed she would, from that moment, consider it as her own. The General was struck with the sylph-like appearance and uncommon beauty of the infant Juliana; placing her on his knee and fondly kissing her, he declared she should share his affections with his darling Edward and Matilda.

It was some time before Alonza was sufficiently composed to return his thanks, or the party thought of taking breakfast. At length Juliana roused them by lisping

lisping out she was very hungry, and that she wanted to see the playfellows her papa had promised her. The General rang the bell, and ordered the children to be brought.

"Do, my dear," addressing Emma, "do make the tea, and give this angel some toast."

Alonza apologised for having detained them from breakfast. Edward and Matilda now made their appearance, and were quite enraptured with their new playmate. The General, after blessing the children, joined their hands with the little Juliana, saying—

"My

"My dears, this gentleman has brought you a new sister; will you not love her?"

"Indeed, grandpapa, I will, and dearly too," said Edward.

"And me too," echoed Matilda.

The infantine prattle and innocent gambols of the children diverted their fond parents, and made even Alonza cheerful.

The morning being fine and mild for the season, Mr. Millward proposed a walk over the grounds, and in the village.

" To-morrow, my dear friend, if agreeable, we will ride over to Thorpe, as I long to shew you a place that a few years back was a wild uncultivated tract of land."

Alonza consented, saying, he should take great pleasure in viewing the park and environs of Upton.

" But give me permission first to present you to Mrs. Evans, the person who has had the care of the child from its birth; she is above the common class of servants in every respect."

Mrs. Evans was immediately called, with whom Emma was much pleased; the good woman had had a thousand fears

fears lest she should not be continued about her little charge; but was quite transported when Mrs. Millward, with her usual condescension, told her she meant to retain her.

"My head nurse and you," continued she, "will, I have no doubt, be very happy together; she is a very respectable person, for whom I have a great regard."

Mrs. Barker was sent for, and introduced to her future companion. Every thing was soon settled relative to the nursery arrangements, and an apartment appointed contiguous for Juliana and her attendant.

 The

The gentlemen set off for their morning excursion. Alonza, in conversing with his friend, felt more comfort than he had done since his recent loss; they passed half an hour at the rectory; the family promised to spend the evening at the Hall, and bring home Fanny Edwards, who had spent a few days with them: they next visited the charitable institutions. Alonza was much pleased on observing the order, industry, and neatness that prevailed in every department of the different establishment, and the comfortable provision the aged enjoyed.

Mr. Millward during their walk briefly recapitulated the hermit's story; it interested Alonza greatly; and finding

ing they had an hour to spare, he proposed paying him a visit. They found the venerable man occupied in cultivating his little garden. He received them with a pleasure that he always evinced on seeing any one from the Hall.

Mr. Millward merely introduced the Marquis as Mr. Seymour, an old friend of his. The hermit welcomed him to his cell; and after setting refreshments before them, showed Alonza every thing worthy of notice in his small domain, who was both charmed and edified with the hermit's discourse, which breathed the spirit of unaffected piety, and without seeming to notice the sable dress or the langour that overspread the fine and expressive countenance of Alonza, en-

entered on a subject the most likely to sooth an afflicted mind, the duty of our being resigned to the dispensations of Omnipotence, whose decrees were ever dictated by mercy and justice. He pointed out the necessity of submission to the Divine will, and of bearing with humility the indispensable ills of this transitory life. He painted in vivid colours the advantages of true religion, which always proved an unfailing resource to the unhappy; at the same time he proved it was incumbent on us to conquer our grief, and not to indulge melancholy reflections, or dwell on misfortunes we could not prevent.

"Let the events that afflict us," continued he with a sigh, "be ever so

severe,

severe, if they do not proceed from guilt, they in time may be overcome. Frequently let us, my sons, raise our thoughts to Heaven, and with meek-eyed patience bend before the throne of mercy, convinced that the Supreme Being never chastises frail mortals but for wise though to us, unknown purposes; but pardon me, my friends, for intruding my advice; impute it to my wish tomeliorate and soften the pangs of a feeling and deeply-wounded mind."

The gentlemen returned their thanks, particularly Alonza, who said, if permitted, he should, during his short stay, visit the Hermitage daily. Edmund replied, he should think himself highly favoured. They then entered on the

subject of literature, in which the hermit displayed both taste and critical knowledge. They did not think of separating till the dinner hour approached; they then took a reluctant leave of the good old man.

Alonza's mind was much tranquillised by the society of his early friend, and the admonitions of the hermit. At dinner he exerted himself, and entered into conversation with some degree of vivacity, and displayed talents that justified the warmth of Mr. Millward's attachment.

On the entrance of the little folks with the desert, Alonza was pleased to find Juliana quite at home; climbing

on

on his knee, she begged her dear papa not to take her from that fine pretty house, nor from her brother and sister. Fondly kissing her, he told her if she was good, she should remain with them.

"And will you stay with me, papa?"

"No, my love, that is not in my power."

"But you will come and see me?"

Alonza was agitated, which Mrs. Millward perceiving, engaged the child's attention, and he soon regained his composure.

Edward asked leave for Henry to be permitted

permitted to come and have some fruit, for James said he would not let him because there was a strange gentleman.

"Pray let me see him," said Alonza. Edward ran to fetch him. "I am glad that honest James does not recollect me," said the Marquis.

"I had no fear he would," replied the General; "for he was gone to see his friends at the time you favoured us with your company at Belle-Vue, and did not return till the day before you left us."

"I remember him perfectly, as there was something in his countenance that strongly prejudiced me in his favour."

Your

"Your skill in physiognomy does you credit; he is the best and most faithful of creatures. I regard him as one of my family, and as such shall provide for him."

Edward and Henry now entered. The latter, according to the charge given him by his mother, made his best bow. He was a fine sprightly boy, and had received the same instructions as his young friend Edward. The children were full of play, and engaged the attention of the party till the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Montague, Fanny Edwards, and the lively Louisa, now in her eleventh year. They immediately adjourned to the drawing-room; Mrs. Millward, apo-

apologised for retaining the little ones till their bed time.

"But my friends are so good as to indulge me, and I trust Mr. Seymour will not object to the little intruders."

"On the contrary, my dear Madam, you gratify me exceedingly."

The children were delighted; Fanny and Louisa were caressing them, and all joined in admiring Juliana, whose infantine attractions deeply interested all who beheld her.

After tea the General proposed a concert, which was readily agreed to, and the

the music-room was ordered to be prepared. The Marquis played on several instruments, and had an excellent voice, and by his taste and judgement added much to the entertainment. Fanny and Louisa took a part, and acquitted themselves in a stile that did them great credit.

The evening passed in a most agreeable manner, nor did the party think of separating till James, as usual, reminded the General it was long past his time of retiring.

"And you know your Honour was up so very late last night."

The

The next morning Alonza evinced by his looks he had had a refreshing sleep. When he met the family at breakfast he told them he had been paying the hermit a long visit, and had received much consolation.

"I found the good old man playing with the children. Edward's prattle engaged his attention. He was telling all he knew of Juliana, and entreating him to love her as much as he did him, Matilda, and Henry. The girls were seated on each knee, whose innocent caresses delighted the worthy man. He accosted me in the most polite and friendly manner.

" 'That is Juliana's papa,' cried Edward, who at that instant seeing me, stretched out her hands to come to me.

" After playing with them, and giving each some token of his affection, they and their attendants pursued their walk, and I opened my whole soul to him; but for the particulars of my story I have referred him to you, my friend; he has indeed poured the balm of comfort on my wounded mind, and taught me to bear my sorrows like a man. The leaving my beloved child in such hands has relieved me from a weight of sorrow."

After breakfast the Marquis and Mr. Millward rode over to Thorpe. If the

former was charmed with the magnificence and taste displayed at Upton Hall; he was equally surprised and pleased with the neatness, simplicity, and comfort which presided in every dwelling throughout this happy village. The cheerful countenances that every where met his sight, the regularity and order of the charitable institutions, which were on the same plan, though rather more extensive than those at Upton, spoke highly in favour of the founder.

The kind familiarity of Mr. Millward, and his minute attention to the care and happiness of each individual, could only be equalled by the unfeigned respect paid him by the inhabitants. His presence created

created a little holiday. The children crowded round him, to all of whom he gave little presents.

Mr. Millward led Alonza to an eminence which commanded an extensive and rich prospect, with a distant view of the ocean; a small purling stream meandered through various parts of this delightful spot.

" Here, my friend, I intend to erect a cottage orneé; with cultivation, and assisting nature by art, I think I can raise a little terrestrial paradise. I wish it to be occupied by tenants of the higher class, who, from the vicissitudes of life, might be impelled by motives of economy to seek a shelter from an unfeeling

world,

world. Should I be so fortunate as to select a family of this description, possessed of a cultivated understanding and a good heart, I shall esteem myself happy, as it would be a great addition to our domestic circle."

"Would to Heaven, my dear Millward," exclaimed the Marquis, "that I could become your neighbour; blessed in your society, that of your amiable family, and viewing the opening perfections of our blooming progeny, I should pass my days in tranquillity, though happiness is for ever fled: yet that consolation is denied me. I must endeavour to rouse myself, and fulfil the duties of my station in devoting my time to the service of my country. But,

alas!

alas! what can an individual do where oppression and superstition reign? educated in the land of freedom, where the inhabitants enjoy true liberty, under a mild government, and the monarch is the father of his people; where the religion is pure and simple, and every one is permitted to think for himself; in such a country I should glory in taking an active part in defending and supporting so wise, so excellent, so God-like a constitution; rather would I have been born a peasant in this favoured island, than heir to my father's Dukedom. How comes it, my friend, that, with your fortune and abilities, I find you in a private station?"

"Believe me," replied Mr. Millward,

" it does not proceed either from an inactive mind, or from not being sensible that every man is destined, in some measure, to contribute to the general welfare. For many years I was in the service of the public, and flatter myself I did not abuse the confidence reposed in me; that I discharged the duties of my office to the satisfaction of my employers, with credit to myself, and benefit to those placed under my direction. At my return to my native land, unexpected blessings awaited me; united to the woman whom, from childhood, I loved, possessed of riches beyond my most sanguine wishes, my soul was absorbed in gratitude to the all-wise Disposer of good and evil. I seriously reflected how I could be most useful to my

my fellow creatures: the plans of the late Mr. Roberts excited my admiration, and I determined not only to pursue, but to extend them. I have the pleasure of finding, though the village of Thorpe is still in its infancy, that my endeavours have proved successful. You will allow, my friend, that so extensive an undertaking requires the constant presence of the proprietor: for this reason I have declined a seat in Parliament, and trust I shall be able to contribute more essentially to the good of my country, by being the means of giving it some hundreds of valuable members, who, educated in the habit of industry, early grounded in religion, and taught by precept and example moral rectitude, will fill the humble walk of life with

honour, and prove, if called on, they have an heart to stand forth in defence of their King and country."

Alonza highly approved the reasons his friend gave for choosing to remain a plain country gentleman. They strolled to the Parsonage, the future residence of young Montague and Fanny Edwards, where Alonza had again occasion to admire the taste of Mr. Millward, and the delight he took in diffusing happiness. After seeing every thing worthy of observation, they returned to Upton. The evening was spent at the Rectory.

A week passed; and the Marquis, though reluctantly, was forced to think of

of quitting Devonshire. He had received a letter from the Duke, acquainting him he was perfectly recovered; and if Alonza did not find himself sufficiently strong to bear the fatigue of travelling, he would join him, and pass the winter in France.

This intelligence made him resolve to embark for Spain immediately. The General and Mr. and Mrs. Millward, on being acquainted with his determination, expressed their regret at losing the pleasure of his society.; they strongly urged him to spend the ensuing summer with them.

" I cannot, my dear friends, promise myself that felicity; but I need not

assure you that no endeavour on my part shall be wanting to re-visit England, where I may truly say I shall leave my heart."

The evening previous to the Marquis's departure, after the children had retired, and he had recovered the shock the thoughts of embracing his little Juliana for the last time had occasioned, he said—

"I must now intrude on you some business relative to your adopted daughter. You already know that the fortune of her angelic mother was thirty thousand pounds; five more were added to it by the bequest of the revered Mrs. Beaumont, and I have made an addition of

of fifty thousand, which I am enabled to do without giving my father any cause of suspicion; his allowance is liberal in the extreme, and the income I possess in right of my mother is more than adequate to my expenses, besides a large sum of ready money come to me when of age, which had accrued during my minority; this last sum I have placed in the hands of my banker, the rest is in the Bank of England. In a cabinet, which I shall leave in my dressing room, you will find papers, properly signed and attested, which give you, my dear friends, unlimited power to act by Juliana in every respect as your daughter. I have resigned all right to the child; dispose both of her person and fortune as you think best. The jewels and

trinkets belonging to her are in a box in the cabinet; receive the keys of both. Once more accept my thanks for undertaking this important charge. Excuse me for being brief on the subject; I dare not indulge my feelings."

Mrs. Millward was going to reply, but Alonza stopped her by saying—

"I conjure you, my dear Madam, by our friendship, spare me; let the subject end here. Suffer me to retire a few minutes; I will soon rejoin you."

This was the only unpleasant evening they had spent since the arrival of Alonza; every one strove to enliven the conversation, but in vain, yet they were loath to separate. James, according to custom,

custom, had twice reminded his master it was past eleven. At last, the Marquis starting suddenly up, took a candle from the side-board, and just articulating—

"God bless and protect you!" rushed out of the room.

The family were so much affected by Alonza's manner, that they retired almost immediately.

As Mr. Millward was ascending the stairs, he met the Marquis's valet, who delivered a note from his master, earnestly requesting that the General and Mr. and Mrs. Millward would spare him the pangs of a parting interview, promising to write as soon as possible after his

arrival in Spain. He mentioned that he intended to pay an early visit to the good hermit, with whom he should breakfast, and order his carriage to meet him at the end of the Park.

Mrs. Millward desired the children might be kept in the nursery till she sent for them. In the morning when the young folks entered the breakfast parlour, their first inquiries were after Mr. Seymour: on being told he was gone, Edward burst into tears; Juliana flung her arms about Mrs. Millward's neck, and sobbing, said—

"My dear Mamma, I love you dearly; but I will love you still better if you will make papa come again."

Emma

Emma, tenderly kissing her, assured her if she was a good girl, she should soon see her dear papa. The General, though much affected, took her on one knee and Matilda on the other, and strove, by caresses and amusing stories, to quiet her. Matilda desired her not to cry, and she would give her her last new doll. Edward, drying his tears, promised her his little horse.

At length Juliana became pacified, and soon recovered her gaiety. Fanny Edwards proposed to walk with them to the Rectory, and bring Louisa Montague to spend the day.

"Do my dear," said the General; "and prevail on Mr. and Mrs. Mon-

tague to favour us with their company."

As soon as the children had set out on their visit, Mr. Millward fetched the cabinet which the Marquis had left in his room, and a large packet directed to him; it contained the papers relative to Juliana, among which was the certificate of his marriage, and the name and residence of the clergyman, likewise the register of the birth of the child, and by whom christened: the casket contained jewels and trinkets to a large amount, with the picture of the Marchioness richly set with diamonds. He particularly requested that Juliana should remain ignorant of her high rank, and pass, as agreed, for an orphan of fortune,

distantly

distantly related to the General; for though Juliana called the Marquis father, it was given out he was only the friend of her late parents, entrusted to deliver her to her guardians. No one was in the secret but Mrs. Evans and the hermit.

It was settled that Juliana's fortune should accumulate; and that she and Matilda should be educated in the first stile, under the inspection of Mrs. Millward, who was so unfashionable as to think it the duty of a mother to superintend the education of her children, and to plant in their hearts the seeds of religion and virtue.

Young as they were, she had already pre-

prepared their minds for instruction. Nature had been bountiful: their tempers were good, their persons handsome and well formed, and their dispositions and understanding promised all the most sanguine parent could desire. Matilda was gentleness itself; Edward had a warmth of temper, but was easily appeased, he had already given repeated proofs of a benevolent heart, his attachments were strong, and he was generous in the extreme; Juliana, though still an infant, displayed grace in every movement, her manners were engaging, and her already expressive eyes beamed with intelligence; she was affectionate to a degree, more lively than Matilda, yet equally tractable; every day endeared her more to the family.

The

The General observed that it was time for Edward to be put under the direction of a tutor—

"And indulge an old man's wish, and let our god-son Henry, in some measure, partake of the same instructions as Edward."

Mr. Millward replied, that he perfectly coincided with him; he thought Henry a very fine promising boy, and his temper and disposition such as deserved encouragement, and Edward could not have a better companion.

"If you, Sir, and Emma approve of it, I shall this day commission Mr. Mon-

tague

tague to select a gentleman properly qualified."

Mrs. Millward said, as she should soon lose her young companion and kind assistant Fanny Edwards, she must look out for a lady to share with her the task of educating the girls.

The conversation was for the present suspended by the entrance of Fanny and the children, accompanied by the family from the Rectory. The party agreed, as the morning was fine, to walk till dinner, except the General, who took his accustomed airing in his garden chair, which James always drove.

During the ride the General communicated to James the intention of educating his son with Edward. It is impossible to describe the joy and gratitude of this worthy creature; it was some time before he could express his thanks.

"Lord bless and reward your honour for your unbounded goodness to me and mine; Betty will be out of her wits to think that Henry is to have the honour of being brought up with his young master. Ah, Sir, the boy is I hope good, and will prove a comfort to us; and by his affection and duty to the best of masters, endeavour to deserve his goodness."

"I have

"I have no doubt of it, James; and if he turns out as honest and faithful as his parents, I shall think myself amply repaid for my care and solicitude.

At their return the household were informed by James of the great condescension and goodness of his master, in permitting Henry to be brought up with his grandson. All the domestics rejoiced, as James and his wife were much beloved: nothing could equal the gratitude of this worthy pair. Henry was told over and over of the honour done him.

After dinner Mr. Millward mentioned his determination of giving Edward a private education, and requested Mr. Mon-

Montague to recommend a proper tutor. Mrs. Millward said smiling—

"As your son, Mr. Montague, will shortly deprive me of my young friend, who has hitherto kindly assisted me in instructing my little ones, I also must depend on you to find me a substitute."

Fanny blushed; which the General perceiving, gave her a hearty shake by the hand, saying—

"Never, my dear girl, be ashamed of having resigned your heart to young Montague, who, I am certain, is deserving of you; so here is a bumper to the speedy accomplishment of his wishes."

Mr. Montague bowed and drank the toast. As they perceived Fanny was embarrassed, they changed the subject, and Mr. Montague challenged the General to give him his revenge at chess; the party was instantly made, and Mr. Millward agreed to take up the conqueror.

The next morning Mr. and Mrs. Millward strolled over to the Hermitage, being anxious to learn the particulars of the Marquis's departure. They had the satisfaction of hearing he was quite composed. He had held a long conversation with the hermit, and they had parted with mutual regret.

Mr. and Mrs. Millward unfolded to

Father

Father Edmund their intended plan of education, which the good old man approved of, and commended their kindness in giving Henry a good education.

"From the judgment I have formed of him, I will venture to pronounce your task will be amply repaid in cultivating so rich a soil; the boy has quick parts and an excellent heart."

They were greatly pleased that the venerable man coincided in their opinion.

"I shall trouble you, my good friend," said Mr. Millward, "to inspect the progress of the boys; and, if not

too

too great a fatigue and intrusion on your time, I should wish them to pass an hour with you three times a week."

"I accept, my dear Sir, the trust with pleasure, highly flattered in your thinking me worthy of it. The society of the dear children always affords me happiness and exhilarates my spirits."

Mrs. Millward hoped that the girls would be, in a year or two, permitted to share their instructions; and till they were capable to benefit by them, they would be allowed to visit him as usual.

"Most readily, my dearest Madam, do I comply with your request; indeed, it would render me miserable to be

deprived

deprived of the company of those lovely infants. As long as it shall please Heaven to spare my life, it shall be devoted to your beauteous progeny; may they, as they increase in years, increase in every virtue, and may they tread in the steps of their revered parents."

The conversation now turned on the different modes of education. With the assistance of the hermit, they formed a rough sketch, which he promised to digest and commit to paper. Mr. and Mrs. Millward were delighted with having put things in so good a train, which they communicated to the General, who approved of the arrangements they had made. In less than a month Mr. Mon-

tague

tague informed them that he had found a gentleman whom he could recommend for a tutor.

"He is," said he, "an old friend of mine, though many years younger, being only just turned of forty. He, early in life, embraced the clerical profession, but being disappointed of a living, which he had been long promised, he gave up a laborious curacy; and possessing a small independency, he resolved to gratify his taste and travel. He has spent above ten years abroad; has visited, not only every place in Europe worthy notice, but has made the tour of a great part of America and Asia. He is a learned sensible man, an excellent classic scholar, and no stranger to the polite

polite arts; he is likewise master of the modern languages. But you shall form your own judgment of him, as I have given him an invitation to spend some time at the Rectory. About a week since I received a letter from him, acquainting me of his return to England, and mentioning he had thoughts of augmenting his income by undertaking the education of half a dozen young gentlemen, and that he was looking for a house. It instantly struck me that he was the very person I should choose for a preceptor. I wrote immediately to him, acquainting him with my commission, and begged he would proceed no farther in his intended plan till he had favoured me with a visit, when I hoped to have the happiness of settling

him near me, as I was certain the situation I had to offer would meet his approbation. This post brought me his answer, and he promises to be with me in a few days."

The General and Mr. and Mrs. Millward were quite pleased with the account Mr. Montague gave, whom they thanked, and assured they would do all in their power to render Mr. Smith's abode with them every way agreeable.

CHAP. V.

In less than a week Mr. Montague introduced the Rev. Mr. Smith at the Hall, whose appearance was truly prepossessing; his countenance was an index of his mind, his deportment and manners elegant, and his conversation enlightened and entertaining; in short, in him was comprised the scholar, the finished gentleman, and the Christian. If the family at the Hall were charmed

with Mr. Smith, he was no less so with them. A very few hours settled the business to the satisfaction of all parties. It was agreed that Mr. Smith should devote a short time to friendship, then return to London, and settle his affairs; and as soon as convenient to him become an inmate at the Hall.

During his stay at the Rectory the families continually met: Mr. Smith was introduced to the hermit, with whom he soon contracted an intimacy that ripened into friendship.

Father Edmund declared that he thought Mr. Smith's ideas of education, and his abilities to execute them, so superior to his, that he should decline

laying

laying down any plan, but leave the mode of instructing the boys entirely to him.

Mr. Smith thanked him for the high opinion he entertained of him, which he should make every exertion to deserve, but hoped to be favoured with his advice; and that he would, at stated periods, examine his pupils, and give his opinion of their progress, which Father Edmund promised to do.

After spending a month with his friends, Mr. Smith set off for London; and as soon as he had finished his business, returned to Devonshire. His establishment at the Hall was on a most liberal scale. A handsome apartment,

with a study, was appropriated for his use; he had his own servant and saddle horses, and a salary of two hundred pounds a year.

Previously to his commencing preceptor he had ingratiated himself with his pupils, and studied their dispositions, with which their abilities, and the progress they had made, their extreme youth considered, he was so perfectly satisfied, that he began his employment with alacrity and pleasure.

Mrs. Millward had not been successful in her inquiries after a governess; she was anxious to be settled with one before the marriage of Fanny Edwards took place; chance, at length, directed

her choice. An advertisement in a morning paper attracted her notice, which, having perused with attention, she gave it to Mr. Millward, and desired him to read it aloud, who, with the General, was struck with it.

The lady was the widow of an officer, had been well educated, and accustomed to move in a genteel sphere; but from various misfortunes was reduced to a small income, which she wished to increase by being received into a respectable family, as governess to one or two young ladies: the most satisfactory references would be given relative to her abilities and connection.

They resolved to answer it immedi-

ately. Mr. Millward wrote to Mr. Steward, requesting him to make the necessary inquiries. They were agreeably surprised by Mr. Steward answering their letter in person. He said he had long intended himself the pleasure of passing a few weeks at Upton; but the interest he took in the lady whom they had commissioned him to inquire after, made him resolve to set off immediately.

"I flatter myself, General, that you will stand her friend when I tell you she is the daughter of the late Major Johnson, and widow of Lieutenant Owen."

"God bless me," cried the General, "her father served under my command; he was an excellent soldier, and

a most

a most worthy man. Her husband was in the same regiment, but not till some years after I had quitted it: of him I know nothing. But how comes it she is in such indifferent circumstances? Her father possessed a good fortune, and she was an only child."

"True, my old friend; but love, almighty love, has been her ruin. Major Johnson died soon after she came of age, and left her mistress of twenty thousand pounds. Lieutenant Owen was an elegant young man, of a most insinuating address; and having seen Miss Johnson at a friend's house, thought her a prize worth securing. Suffice it to say, he succeeded in gaining her affections, and they were united as soon as the

mourning for her father had expired. He was good-natured, but thoughtless, and fond of dissipation. For some years he conducted himself with tolerable propriety; but, unfortunately, he became intimate with some young men of fashion, who led him into every extravagance. A few months involved him in difficulties. He took to gaming, which, in a short time, completed his ruin and destroyed his constitution; and he died a martyr to his follies, leaving his widow totally unprovided. His effects were not sufficient to pay his debts. Mrs. Owen gave up every thing to the creditors, and obtained the pension. Several friends invited her to spend some time with them, which she accepted, but resolved to exert her

talents

talents for her future support, yet she determined to wait till some eligible situation offered: at length she resolved to advertise. She was quite delighted with the polite letter she received from Mrs. Millward, which I sent with a note, saying I would wait on her the next morning. As soon as we met we recognised each other, though I had not seen her since her marriage. She was both surprised and pleased to find that the lady who addressed her was the daughter of General Roberts, and entreated my interest to procure her so desirable a situation. In short, I promised to pay you a visit, and had no doubt I should bring her pleasing intelligence."

"I am happy, my friend," said the General, "to see you on any occasion. But why did you not bring Mrs. Owen with you? you might have promised her a kind reception."

"I did propose it, but out of delicacy she declined it. I have a letter for you, Madam," addressing Mrs. Millward.

Mrs. Owen expressed her solicitude to be received in the family; terms she left entirely to them.

Her letter was immediately answered. She was requested to set out for Upton Hall as soon as convenient, where she was impatiently expected. The General

was

was anxious to receive the daughter of Major Johnson under his protection.

Mrs. Millward assured her she would do every thing to render her situation pleasant, and desired she would bring an attendant.

Mrs. Owen arrived in the course of a fortnight. She was welcomed as an old friend. The General embraced her with affection, and hoped she would consider him as a father. Mrs. Owen was sensibly affected by her kind reception. Mr. and Mrs. Millward were much pleased with her manner and deportment; and on entering into conversation, they found she possessed a refined understanding, which had been highly

highly cultivated; she spoke French and Italian fluently, and was every way qualified for the important task of educating girls of fashion, of embellishing their minds, of forming their morals, and rendering them fit for the sphere their rank and fortune entitled them to move in.

The next morning Mrs. Millward, with great politeness, told her that she had fixed her salary at two hundred a year, (the same as Mr. Smith's). Mrs. Owen would have expressed her gratitude.

"No thanks, my dear Madam, the obligation will be on my side; and I flatter myself that you will consider

yourself

yourself as a friend, and quite at home in our family; at present you must only be a visitor, as you must pass some weeks with us before you undertake the charge of the children; there are many things worthy your seeing; and as the season is yet fine, we will take the advantage of it."

Mr. Steward was prevailed on to pass his Christmas in Devonshire.

"It is so long since we met," said the General, "that I shall not easily part with you."

They made several excursions to Thorpe, and paid frequent visits to Father Edmund, with whom Mrs. Owen

was

was quite delighted; Christmas passed with the accustomed festivities, and open house was kept, as usual, for twelve days.

Young Montague had left Oxford, and had taken orders; he was of course a constant visitor at the Hall. On new-year's day Mr. Millward presented him to the living of Thorpe, which had been held for him by a neighbouring clergyman, who was liberally rewarded for his trouble. On the Sunday following the whole family attended to hear him preach his first sermon: he acquitted himself in a manner highly satisfactory to his parishioners and patrons.

The dreary season of winter was not

felt

felt in this truly hospitable mansion, nor by any who were so happy as to live under their protection. On their domain the golden age was nearly realised, poverty was unknown, and peace and plenty were to be found in the cottager's humble abode; no overgrown farms were permitted on the estate; and that pest to society, a monopoliser, was unknown; the farmers, by honest industry, increased their fortunes, and brought up their families with respectability; age was treated with respect; and after sixty-five they dined once a month with the family at the Hall. This mark of distinction not only highly gratified their feelings, but insured them the attention and regard of the young people, who

were emulous to deserve the praise of their patrons.

At length the day arrived that was to unite the destiny of Fanny Edwards and young Montague. The ceremony was performed privately at the parish church by his father; Mr. Millward gave her away, Louisa was bride-maid. They dined *en famille* at the Hall, where they passed a week, when the bride and bridegroom were conducted by the General and Mr. and Mrs. Millward to their new habitation; the family at the Rectory followed them; the parishioners met them on the road, and received the young couple in a most flattering manner. An elegant dinner was prepared

at

at the Parsonage for the principal inhabitants, at the expense of the General, who insisted on being pay-master for that day.

The cottagers were not forgotten; they were liberally supplied with roast beef, plumb pudding, and ale. James and his wife were the conductors of the feast. The charitable institutions partook of the general merriment; they were all new cloathed on the occasion; in short, it was an holiday throughout the village. The children had cakes, fruit, and tea; and the old folks each a bottle of elder wine to drink the bride and bridegroom's health.

The day passed in mirth. The happy

villagers

villagers had a dance in the evening: Mr. and Mrs. Millward, and most of the company joined. The little ones had been permitted to be of the party; and were quite delighted at being allowed to play with the children belonging to the school, to each of whom they made a present. At an early hour they were sent back with their attendants to Upton; the rest of the company did not break up till one in the morning, when all retired with the greatest decorum to their respective habitations.

Poor Fanny's heart was full when her kind patrons took their leave; scarcely could she bid them adieu, nor were they less affected. Louisa was left to pass some time with her. This amiable and

lively

lively child was much attached to her new sister, and doated on her brother.

It was settled that the same festivities should be observed at Upton the week following. Every thing was conducted exactly in the same manner as at Thorpe, excepting that the different institutions dined at the Hall, and the company was more numerous, as the neighbouring families were invited. Edward and Henry, to their great joy, were permitted to go down two dances: Juliana and Matilda were humble spectators. As on the former occasion all was managed with the strictest propriety, and all returned to their abodes pleased and gratified by the munificence and condescension displayed at the Hall.

Mrs.

Mrs. Millward could not help regreting the loss of her young favourite, to whom she had been for so many years accustomed, but the society of Mrs. Owen, her affectionate attention, joined to the reflection that Fanny had every prospect of happiness, reconciled her. Scarcely a week passed without Fanny's spending one or two days with her.

Juliana and Matilda were committed to the care of Mrs. Owen, whom Mrs. Millward had the pleasure of finding perfectly adequate to the charge. Part of the morning was devoted to instruction, the rest to exercise and air. At dinner Mr. Smith and Mrs. Owen joined the party. If there was no company, the children accompanied them to the

drawing

drawing room, and they were indulged with playing at little games suitable to their age, at once instructive and amusing.

Having now happily settled our heroine, we will leave her and her young companions to pursue their education, under the most promising auspices, and follow the Marquis to Madrid, as it is necessary to take a review of some circumstances which had occurred during his long absence.

CHAP. VI.

The Marquis, on his arrival at Madrid, found the Duke in a very weak state; the meeting was an affecting one. Alonza's spirits were low, and the alteration in the looks of his father alarmed him.

"My dear son," said the Duke, tenderly embracing him, "you know not how anxious I have been to behold you. Since

Since I wrote last to you I have had a relapse, and was fearful I should depart this life without the satisfaction of giving you my blessing. Thanks to Almighty Providence, who has heard my prayers! My son is returned; never, I hope, will he quit Spain again, during the short period of my existence."

Alonza assured the Duke he would obey his request, but hoped he had many years to live. The Duke fervently thanked him. He said, anxiety on his account had preyed on his mind.

"Your frequent and long absences, my son, afflicted me; and I was fearful there was some hidden cause; it has been taken notice of at Court, and it required

all my interest with the sovereign to deprecate his anger. Various reports have been circulated to your disadvantage. I believe they originated in Don Gusman and Donna Triphosa; they have been some months returned to Madrid; the relation they were attending is dead, and has left them a large estate; he is become a great favourite at Court, and holds several lucrative places; they have been unremitting in their attentions to me; scarce a day passes without my seeing them; and, under the mask of friendship, they have endeavoured to poison my mind; but the affections of a father are not so easily alineated. Never could I believe my Alonza would act unworthy of himself, or deceive me in any point."

Alonza felt he had acted with duplicity towards his father. He was afraid to ask what crimes were alledged against him; yet, conscious he had not degraded himself, or been guilty of any vice, he assumed courage to inquire what had been laid to his charge.

"Nothing direct; Don Gusman is too artful for that; it is by insinuation he wounds. Far from accusing you, he only, when you are mentioned, wonders that you should be so inattentive to the duties of a subject and a son; hopes the reports he hears are exaggerated. If he is questioned relative to them, he begs to be excused answering, as the voice of rumour is not to be relied on; and if it spoke truth, his

 affection

affection for you is so strong, that he would conceal your errors, not expose them; wished you would return and clear your fame, as he had in vain ex-erted himself to quell the stories circulated to your disadvantage. You may be sure I have endeavoured to trace the calumniators of my son, but in vain. It is given out that you are dissipated, addicted to gaming, and have been connected with a low artful woman, in whose snares you have entangled yourself, and have transmitted large sums to England to support her extravagance."

Here the emotions of the Marquis had nearly betrayed the secret. That a reflection should be cast on the memory of his beloved wife, stung him to the soul;

soul; and if it had not been for the solemn promise he made her when dying, he would have revealed every circumstance to his father; at length he recovered himself, and exclaimed—

"Perish the villain, who, by the most atrocious falsehoods, has undermined my reputation; he shall produce the author of those reports, or answer for them himself. Believe me, my dear father, I have not in one instance deviated from moral rectitude, or been guilty of one of the acts laid to my charge. Oh! would to Heaven, the good St. Clair was living, he would confute these base assertions; but to-morrow Don Gusman shall, in the presence

of my Sovereign, retract his malicious insinuations, and clear my fame."

"My dear Alonza, be calm, and let reason guide you; as Gusman has managed matters, no degree of blame can be attached to him; on the contrary, he appears one of your warmest advocates. Let me conjure you to avoid a quarrel with him; such is his art, it would involve you in ruin. For my sake, treat him with cool civility; make every inquiry, and, if possible, trace the reports to the fountain head; but strong must be the proofs ere you venture to accuse either him or Donna Triphosa."

The Duke became so overpowered by

his

his feelings, that the Marquis, fearing, in his weak state, a relapse of the gout in his stomach, promised to be guided entirely by him in regard to his conduct towards Don Gusman : he changed the subject, and endeavoured to amuse his father by some pleasant anecdotes. When he parted with the Duke for the night, he had the pleasure of leaving him perfectly composed.

Alonza was restless and agitated ; he paced his apartment for some hours ; at length he recollected the promise he had made of writing to Mr. Millward. So scattered were his ideas, that he merely mentioned his being arrived safe, and his father's recent illness ; but said

he should hear from him again shortly, as he had many particulars to relate.

Alonza retired to bed, but vainly he courted sleep, and arose in the morning unrefreshed. He joined the Duke at breakfast, whom he had the satisfaction of finding had rested well, and was much better than on the preceding evening.

They hed scarcely finished their repast when Don Gusman and Donna Triphosa were announced. The Marquis with some difficulty conquered his feelings, and received them with civility, but could not return Gusman's embrace with any degree of cordiality. The scrutinising glances which Alonza cast from

from time to time on him and his lady, (who was profuse in her expressions of friendship) evidently disconcerted them, and they shortened their visit, hoping they should see their *dear* cousin often: a cold bow was the only answer they received.

The Duke, who during their stay, had sat on thorns, fearing that Alonza would not be able to command his temper, was heartily rejoiced at their departure, and thanked his son for his conduct.

"Be assured, my dear Sir, you shall not have any cause for uneasiness in future on my account. As there is a levee to-morrow, I mean to pay my duty

at Conrt; I shall find by the reception I meet with from my sovereign how far Gusman has injured me. Have no fears in regard to my safety, for I think him so great a paltroon, that he is beneath my chastisement; contempt is all I shall ever bestow on him."

"Yet beware, I beseech you, my son, of both him and Triphosa; she is artful in the extreme, and capable of forming and executing the most diabolical plans to satiate her revenge. She, I am convinced, has never forgiven your refusal of her hand. I wish I could present you; but as that is impossible, suppose I request the favor of Don Sebastian; he has long since renewed the acquaintance; indeed, his friendship and Sophronia's

nia's seem to increase daily; they interest themselves in all that concerns you, nor will they suffer a whisper against you in their presence. They arrived in town last night. You will oblige me much by paying your respects to them."

"Most willingly, my dear Sir; no persons stand higher in my esteem. Is the lovely Sophronia still single?"

"She is, and refuses every alliance; some of our most noble and accomplished cavaliers have paid their devoirs to her but in vain; sometimes I think she repents her caprice, and that she is attached to you."

"Oh, my dear Sir, do not accuse of caprice one of the most perfect of her sex. I am certain her reasons for re-refusing me were founded on justice and——"

He was proceeding, but found by the Duke's looks of astonishment, that he had awakened suspicions. Before he could question him, he added—

"What I mean by saying she had reasons that justified her breaking off the match was, that her health being at that time in so very precarious a state, it would not have been consistent with prudence to marry."

"Well, well," replied the Duke, "I often

often thought your conduct and Sophronia's highly enigmatical."

"We shall, Sir, I hope, shortly explain it to your satisfaction."

"Ah, my son, you know not the pleasure that hint gives me."

Observing Alonza sigh deeply, and a melancholy overspread his countenance, the Duke changed the discourse, and Alonza recovered his serenity, and exerted himself as usual to amuse the Duke. Finding him in tolerable spirits, he said—

"I will now leave your Grace, and call on Don Sebastian; but as we cannot

stir

stir without parade, I must order the carriage."

While it was getting ready, Alonza entered into a short detail of the customs of England, which he owned he was partial to, and drew so lively a caricature of the formality of the Spanish Dons, that the Duke could not forbear owning, in spite of prejudice, that the simple manners of the English afforded more real comfort and enjoyment.

The Marquis met with a most cordial reception from the worthy Don Sebastian, who, as soon as Alonza was announced, flew to receive him, and embraced him with fervency; they were both affected, and it was some minutes before

before Alonza could inquire after the Lady Sophronia.

"She, thank Heaven, is much better than she has been," replied Sebastian; "I will acquaint her of your being here; she will be happy to see you. I will go and prepare her for the interview."

"Stop, my dear Sir, I conjure you, though I am impatient to pay my acknowledgements to the amiable Sophronia, I must entreat your permission to allow me to open my whole heart to you; first, begging you to accept of my sincere thanks for the kind part you have acted in silencing calumnies raised against me in my absence."

Sebastian

Sebastian resumed his seat, saying—

"Willingly, my Lord, will I listen to your detail; believe me, when I assure you I feel the affection of a father for you: in regard to what I and my daughter have advanced in defence of your character, no thanks are due, as we merely did an act of justice; but we will discuss this subject more fully hereafter, at present I am impatient for your promised confidence."

Alonza entered into a minute detail of every circumstance that had occurred since they met; it was with difficulty he got through the painful relation, so strongly did his feelings overpower him.

Don

Don Sebastian did not hear him unmoved; most sincerely did he sympathise in his sufferings, and deplore the untimely death of the young and beautiful Juliana; he agreed with Alonza that his promise to the departed ought to be held sacred, else it would have been better to have published the marriage.

"Yet," continued Sebastian, "as you have no offspring, it is not of so much consequence."

The Marquis longed to acquaint this worthy man that he had a lovely pledge of affection in existence, but his oath obliged him to silence. He begged Don Sebastian to acquaint Sophronia with every circumstance he had related, and

that

that he would request her to favour him with an interview.

"I will certainly execute your commission; but my daughter must decide for herself; if in your favour it will make me happy; for I own I am vain enough to imagine that Sophronia's virtues and accomplishments, aided by time, will put her in full possession of your affections; hers I know have long been fixed on you. I use no reserve to you, which will evince the high sense I entertain of your honour."

"Never, by Heaven!" exclaimed Alonza, "will I forfeit your good opinion by any act of mine; but I have made so long a visit that the Duke will

wonder at my absence. I had almost forgot his message, which is, to request you would present me to-morrow at the levee, as he is unable to attend himself."

"With pleasure, and afterwards I hope you will pass the day with us. You have nothing to apprehend in regard to your reception at Court, as I have taken care to counteract the machinations of your enemies."

Alonza repeated his thanks, and took his leave. He found the Duke anxious for his return.

"From the length of your visit," said he, "I trust you and Donna Sophronia are

are once more on the footing of lovers."

"Indeed, my dear Sir, I have not had the happiness of seeing her, but have met with a most pleasing reception from Don Sebastian, whom I am to accompany to the levee; and have promised if you are tolerable, to dine with him, when I shall have the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with his charming daughter."

The Duke was quite delighted at this information, but being determined not to press his son, dropped the subject.

Don Gusman and Donna Triphosa had paid their respects during Alonza's absence,

absence, who again promised the Duke to be on terms of civility with them. The rest of the day was occupied in receiving visits of compliment.

At the appointed hour he attended Don Sebastian to Court, and was agreeably surprised at being received, not only by his Sovereign, but the whole Court, in the most gracious manner. The King congratulated him on his return to his native country, which he hoped would be the place of the Marquis's residence in future. Alonza made a suitable reply, and acquitted himself with his accustomed politeness.

After the levee he had the honour of a private audience; the King informed

Alonza of the extent of his obligation to Don Sebastian, who had been indefatigable in removing the prejudices occasioned by a variety of malicious reports.

"Are you, my Lord," continued his Majesty, "returned free? and I trust that you have never formed any engagements that would disgrace you?"

"On my honour, my Liege, I have not; nor is there, I aver, one act of mine I need to blush for."

"Your noble friend pledged his word you would prove yourself worthy of your illustrious birth; and that your frequent excursions and long stay in England, was owing entirely to a partiality

tiality you had imbibed from having received your education in that country, where, of course, you had formed early friendships."

A long conversation ensued, and the Marquis was appointed to a place of confidence immediately about the royal person. It is easily to be imagined that Alonza was flattered by this mark of distinction conferred on him, and he retired from the presence highly gratified. In the anti-chamber he met Don Gusman, who, with well-feigned marks of friendship, congratulated him on the many pleasing events of the day; the Marquis bowed, inquired after Donna Triphosa, promised to call shortly on him, and took his leave. He ordered his

his carriage to stop at home, as he wished to acquaint the Duke with all that had passed at the levee, certain it would make him happy. He then proceeded to fulfil his engagement, and was presented to Sophronia by her father, whom he found as beautiful as ever; to him she appeared more so, as a tender melancholy overspread her fine features, which rendered them inexpressibly interesting. He could not behold her without experiencing feelings acutely painful; hers almost equalled his. She forcibly reminded him of his lost Juliana; the promise he had made rushed in his memory, and occasioned a thousand different sensations, he kissed her hand, but could not speak. Sebastian roused him by saying—

"My

"My friend, we are all impatience to know the result of the private audience you were favoured with; I have acquainted my daughter with the particulars of your reception."

This gave Alonza's thoughts a different turn, by awakening his gratitude; he, in the warmest terms, expressed the high sense he felt of the obligations he laid under to Sebastian, and mentioned the honour conferred on him by his Majesty; he received the most heart-felt compliments on the occasion.

"To-morrow," said Sebastian, "my daughter and you shall have a private conference; but as I have already informed her of most of the circumstances

relative to you, this day I expect you will devote to me; I have invited a small party this evening, and intend having a concert, in which I hope you will both take part."

The Marquis again thanked him, and they conversed on various topics during dinner. By the time the company assembled, the Marquis and Sophronia were sufficiently composed to receive them with ease and apparent cheerfulness.

Alonza returned home far more tranquil than he had been for many months; the dreaded interview with Sophronia was over, and he found his admiration and esteem increased; he even looked forward

forward with impatience to the moment that would decide his fate; he determined to offer his hand to Sophronia, at the same time not to deceive her in any point.

With these resolutions he paid an early visit: Sophronia was alone; her manner of receiving him convinced him he was still dear to her. Void of affectation, and holding coquetry in contempt, this amiable woman did not seek to hide her sentiments, though delicacy and genuine modesty strongly marked every word and action: Alonza's eyes told her he thanked her. Taking her hand, he respectfully raised it to his lips, saying—

"Your father, Madam, has kindly

 spared

spared me the painful recapitulation of my late loss; he has likewise informed you of the vow I made the dying saint, and her request to you; strange as it may appear, the purest motives actuated her heart, the seat of every virtue—"

Sophronia interrupted him, by entreating him not to dwell on a scene she was already acquainted with.

"I received," said she, "a letter from the dear departed, written in French, a few days previous to her death; she fully explained her wishes and her motives. When time, my Lord, has softened your grief, you shall peruse it; it cost me many tears, but I trust I have profited by the sentiments of resignation and piety

piety which breathed through every line; she must indeed have been a paragon of perfection."

"Then it is unnecessary, Madam, to say more, than I wait with anxiety your decision; you must fix my doom; my future life I shall be happy to dedicate to you. I offer to your acceptance, charming Sophronia, all that remains of an heart lacerated and torn; my esteem, my veneration you have long possessed; if you deign to unite your fate to mine, every return gratitude can make shall be yours."

"It is in vain, Alonza," replied Sophronia, "to disguise my feelings, nor do I wish it; convinced of your honour

and the purity of your sentiments, I dare tell you that you have long been master of my affections, though, believe me, yourself excepted, no one more sincerely lamented the death of the angelic Juliana; sensible that I shall not be able to supply her place in your heart, I fear to accept your offer; consider well, my Lord, before you enter into indissoluble engagements; do not let even your vow influence your conduct."

"Generous, exalted Sophronia, how do you rise superior to your sex's weakness! Fear not; cold as my heart is, your perfections will warm it; and if I am not an enthusiastic lover, you shall ever find me an affectionate and tender husband."

"Enough,

"Enough, Alonza, receive my hand, my heart is already in your possession. May I ask, without awaking new sorrow, what is become of your lovely infant? Has Heaven recalled the little cherub?"

Alonza was confused; he knew not how to answer; he must either deceive the living, or forfeit his word to the dead; he hesitated. Before he could frame an answer, Sophronia, who concluded, from his manner, that the child was dead, expressed her concern for having distressed him. He took her hand without speaking, and kissed it with fervor. At that moment Don Sebastian entered the apartment, but perceiving the Marquis on his knees, was

going to retire. Alonza, springing up, cried—

"Return, Sir, and congratulate me on having obtained the consent of your lovely daughter to call her mine."

Sebastian instantly joined their hands.

"Receive, my children," said he, "my blessing; long may you live a comfort to each other. Oh, my son! (suffer me, my Lord, to call you by that endearing name,) in bestowing Sophronia on you, I part with every earthly felicity: cherish the gift; believe me it is inestimable."

"Truly am I sensible of its value, my ever

ever-esteemed friend, my more than father: but let my actions more than my words prove I am not unworthy of the prize. Suffer me now to communicate the news to the Duke, whose wishes and commands I have at length fulfilled: then, with permission, I will return, and dedicate the day to friendship."

The Marquis found the Duke just returned from taking the air. As soon as he heard that Alonza had pledged himself to Sophronia, joy almost overpowered him; with tears he embraced him.

"May every blessing a fond parent can bestow attend you! may Heaven hear my most ardent prayers, and bless

you both! Oh! my son, you have given me new life; the most sanguine wish of my soul is accomplished. May this union avert the fatal prophecy!" Dropping on his knees, he exclaimed—"Hear me, Almighty Power! hear a father's supplication, and spare my guiltless son, nor overwhelm me with affliction for crimes committed by my ancestors."

"Rise, Sir," cried Alonza; "for Heaven's sake, what does this mean? suffer me to ask to what prophecy you allude."

The Duke continued a few minutes in mental prayer, then rose with calmness—

"My

"My child, I have been to blame in giving way to my feelings, and rousing a curiosity I cannot satisfy: bound by a sacred oath never to divulge a mystery which, if you were informed of, you could not prevent the threatened danger; therefore rest satisfied to remain in ignorance; let us by our conduct, and strictly discharging every moral and religious duty, merit the protection of Omnipotence, who has saved you from the snares of Gusman, whose malice I find is detected; he has received a severe rebuke for propagating falsehoods to injure your character, and is deprived of all his employments, and, with Donna Triphosa, ordered to retire to their estate the most distant from Madrid. I

gained this intelligence at the minister's, to whom I have been paying my respects: he says, from whom the king received his information of Gusman's baseness is a profound secret. To-morrow I mean to accompany you to pay our acknowledgments to our most gracious monarch, and announce your intended marriage."

"I am heartily rejoiced, my dear Sir," replied Alonza, "that I am released from the necessity of playing the hypocrite, and that Gusman has met with the punishment he merits. I am certain that the unknown friend is the generous Sebastian; what do I not owe that worthy man! One way only can I

repay

repay him for his unremitting kindness to me; which is, by exerting every nerve to render his lovely daughter happy; to her I will devote all the time I can spare from public business. I have promised to return to dinner; do you think, Sir, it would hurt you to join the party?"

"Not in the least; I feel myself perfectly equal to enjoying the society of my dearest friends; we will conclude every thing before we part: the parchments are all ready for signing, being still in the lawyer's hands; I will order them to attend this evening."

Don Sebastian was agreeably surprised at the sight of the Duke; sincerely did he

he welcome him. After the usual compliments—

"Once more," said the Duke, "my old and revered friend, we are met to unite our children; may nothing again disappoint us: but before we enter on business, permit me to assure you how highly sensible I am of the active part you have taken to clear my son from the false imputations of Don Gusman, who I find is in disgrace, and banished the court."

"Who told your Grace," said Don Sebastian, "that I have been the only champion of the Marquis?"

"No one, my Lord, for I am informed

it

it is a profound secret, but my heart points you out, and I believe it speaks the truth."

"With your Grace's permission we will not discuss the matter any farther; thank Heaven, we have got rid of an inveterate foe, I may add foes, for I dare affirm that the lady is equally to be feared."

The Duke instantly changed the subject. The afternoon was devoted entirely to making the proper arrangements. At the particular request of Sophronia, the marriage was to be as private as possible, and they were to spend three months in the country previous to their appearance at Court.

The

The Marquis was charmed with this proof of Sophronia's attention, well knowing it was to indulge his feelings; his eyes spoke his approbation.

The Duke and Don Sebastian were impatient to have the marriage celebrated. Sophronia, who despised the little arts of her sex, and rose superior to false delicacy, replied, on being desired to name the day, that she left it to her father and the Marquis to determine, nor should she make the least objection to their decision.

"Generous Sophronia," cried Alonza, "how shall I ever repay the vast debt I owe you: suffer me to call you mine this day fortnight?"

She

She bowed consent, and he sealed it with a kiss.

Things had passed in so rapid a manner that hardly Alonza had time to communicate his thoughts to his friends in Devonshire; he now resolved to write a circumstantial account of his proceedings. He had twice had the pleasure of hearing from Mr. Millward, and of his little Juliana, who was in perfect health, high spirits, and a universal favourite; severely did he repent his vow, which deprived him of all intercourse with his child.

Ah, thought he, why am I obliged to have a secret from the amiable Sophronia; how happy would she have been

to

to have reared as her own the only remains of my departed wife; but it cannot be, and my Juliana is placed with persons who will every way supply the place of parents.

The Marquis daily became more reconciled to his loss, and was at times lively, and entered with spirit into several little parties which were formed for his amusement.

On the day appointed for his nuptials he met his destined bride at the altar with evident marks of pleasure, and was perfectly composed during the ceremony, which was performed by the Duke's chaplain in a most private manner. They set off immediately for a magnifi-

cent

cent seat belonging to Don Sebastian, which he presented to the new-married pair.

The Duke, previous to his son's marriage, obtained the full consent of his sovereign, who indulged the Marquis with three months' absence before he entered on the duties of his appointment.

On their return to Madrid every thing was prepared for their reception in a most splendid stile; their first appearance at Court was suitable to their rank and fortune. Sophronia gained daily on the affections of the Marquis; his health was perfectly re-establised; the duties of his appointment occupied

a great

a great part of his time, and gave a double relish to the calm hours of domestic enjoyment.

We will now quit them, and re-visit our friends in Devonshire.

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